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The acceptability and feasibility of asking monthly “life-event” questions in between waves of a panel study

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Non-Technical Summary

The purpose of *Understanding Society* is to provide high quality longitudinal data on topics such as health, work, education, income, family and social life. As a new source of insight on societal dynamics and changes, ISER have been developing an approach for 'event-triggered' data collection, whereby when respondents report a relevant life event (e.g. expecting a baby, retirement or a new relationship) this would trigger additional gathering of data directly linked to it.

ISER commissioned Kantar Public to conduct an online forum and focus group with *Understanding Society* participants to explore:

1. How best to capture information on life events that do (or do not) happen between panel interviews, amongst *Understanding Society* panel members, to enable in-depth follow-up questions, and
2. Under which conditions sample members would be willing to report on life events every month.

The study involved 42 participants across an online forum and focus group. Participants were recruited from the *Understanding Society* Innovation Panel. Findings from this study will be used to inform the design of event-triggered data collection materials and protocols.

The idea of event-triggered data collection was broadly accepted. Acceptability was supported by participants' existing relationship with *Understanding Society* and the prospect of financial incentives, and the emotional benefits participation provides to some participants. Except for highly sensitive topics like bereavement and financial circumstances, and health and relationships for some, events were not spontaneously identified as 'off limits.' Participants in our sample were more willing to respond to questions about certain life events, like relationships, health and work. Though, assumptions about the types and detail of questions likely to be asked about within each life event introduced some reservations. The topics of pregnancy and relationships were more likely to be viewed as sensitive and therefore less likely for participants to say they would respond to many follow-up questions.

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Abstract:

ISER commissioned Kantar to conduct an online forum and focus group with *Understanding Society* participants to explore how best to capture information on life events that do (or do not) happen between annual panel interviews, and to explore which conditions sample members would be willing to report on life events every month. The idea of event-triggered data collection was broadly accepted. Acceptability was supported by participants' existing relationship with *Understanding Society*, the prospect of financial incentives, and the emotional benefits participation provides to some participants.

Keywords: qualitative, SMS survey, text messaging, event-triggered, online surveys

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1. Executive Summary

Understanding Society is a longitudinal study that follows the lives of individuals in 40,000 households in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, led by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex. Its purpose is to provide high quality longitudinal data on topics such as health, work, education, income, family and social life. As a new source of insight on societal dynamics and changes, ISER have been developing an approach for 'event-triggered' data collection, whereby when respondents report a relevant life event (e.g. expecting a baby, retirement or a new relationship) this would trigger additional gathering of data directly linked to it.

ISER commissioned Kantar to conduct an online forum and focus group with *Understanding Society* participants to:

1. To explore how best to capture information on life events that do (or do not) happen between panel interviews, amongst *Understanding Society* panel members, to enable in-depth follow-up questions, and
2. To explore which conditions sample members would be willing to report on life events every month.

The study involved 42 participants across an online forum and focus group. Participants were recruited from the *Understanding Society Innovation Panel*. The sample was weighted towards participants most likely to experience one or more of five key life events: health, changes in labour market activity, pregnancy, moving to a new house, changes in relationship status. Researchers used a semi-structured discussion guide and a range of stimulus materials during the online and in-person discussions. Findings from this study will be used by the research and study design teams at ISER to inform the design of event-triggered data collection materials and protocols.

Acceptability of event-triggered data collection

The idea of event-triggered data collection was broadly accepted. Acceptability was supported by participants' existing relationship with *Understanding Society* and the prospect of financial incentives, and the emotional benefits participation provides to some participants. Except for highly sensitive topics like bereavement and financial circumstances, and health and relationships for some, events were not spontaneously identified as 'off limits.' Participants in our sample were more willing to respond to questions about certain life events, like relationships, health and work. Though, assumptions about the types and detail of questions likely to be asked about within each life event introduced some reservations. The topics of pregnancy and relationships were more likely to be viewed as sensitive and therefore less likely for participants to say they would respond to many follow-up questions.

Barriers to willingness to respond to event-triggered data collection

The more participants reflected on the idea of event-triggered data collection, the more reservations to participation emerged. Based on their experiences of the annual survey, participant expectations

of time and effort was a key concern. Potential sensitivities to the data collection process were also identified and included asking questions too soon after a difficult event had taken place and asking about topics that some participants view as too intrusive.

Participants identified two risks to data collection if these sensitivities are not carefully handled. Variable data quality from capturing potentially inaccurate or “overly emotive” responses too soon after they were experienced. While this is always a risk with data collection, the frequency with which participants are expected to engage with event-triggered data collection means the risk may be higher. The second risk was low response rates or high dropout rates from overburdened or distressed participants. Regularly repeated questions about the same events that feel demanding or distressing may prompt participants to opt out of data collection.

Views on the frequency and length of data requests

The amount of time participants were prepared to spend on a monthly and quarterly basis varied, from a couple minutes to over an hour at each data collection point. Generally, participants were less willing to take part monthly and more willing to spend about 15 to 20 minutes in total every three months or so.

Views on data collection mode

Overall, email was the preferred mode of data collection for digitally confident participants because it was convenient, an easy way for many to respond, and it helped some participants feel more in control of their participation. Yet, concerns about the sensitivity of a topic, participants’ confidence with reading and writing and their confidence with digital tools underpinned some preferences for in-person or telephone data collection. There was little appetite across the sample for responding by text message beyond the initial question or a reminder to take part in the data collection. Alternative suggestions for data collection included an online forum or an app where participants can log on at times which suit them and contribute as much or as little as they wished.

Views on compensation for participation

Participants unanimously expected a financial incentive of some form for contributing to event-triggered data collection, with some high expectations of value for time spent that may not be financially viable for ISER to fund. Incentive is necessary but unlikely to be enough on its own for regular responses to data collection requests.

Key recommendations

- Highlight the purpose and benefits of event-triggered data collection, especially to encourage people to respond when they do not have developments to report
- Manage expectations for event-triggered data collection to distinguish it from experiences of the length, depth and mode of participating in the annual survey. Be clear about how much time is likely required, the types of questions asked and reassure about anonymity and confidentiality
- If possible, consider communicating to participants that involvement in event-triggered data collection may reduce the length of the annual survey
- Include supportive messages around the request e.g. *We recognise this topic might be difficult for some people to reflect on depending on their circumstances*

- Consider the feasibility of the incentive plan because incentives will be essential for initial engagement, and maintaining responses over time
- Consider how to practically administer data collection at most every three months with a time requirement of around 20 minutes, which means necessarily prioritising some life events over others
- Tailor as much as possible to personalise the initial monthly request and avoid these questions being repetitive and irrelevant. For example, identify proxy measures in the annual survey to target event-triggered data collection or withhold specific questions to some respondents
- Allow some flexibility in data collection approaches, if possible give a choice of responding by email or telephone and the choice to defer responses to a later date
- Build on this research and conduct feasibility testing for the prototype event-triggered data collection approach

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Understanding Society is an internationally recognised longitudinal study led by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex. Following the lives of individuals within 40,000 households across the UK, it is the largest study of its kind in the world. The purpose of *Understanding Society* is to provide high quality longitudinal insight on a range of topics (e.g. health, work, education, income, family and social life), enriching scientists' and policy-makers' understanding of the causes and consequences of deep-rooted social problems.

As a new source of insight on societal dynamics and changes, ISER have been developing an approach for 'event-triggered' data collection, whereby when respondents report a relevant life event (e.g. expecting a baby, retirement or a new relationship) this would trigger additional gathering of data directly linked to it.

2.2 Aims

Kantar were commissioned to undertake qualitative research to support future waves of *Understanding Society*. The research had two main aims:

1. To explore how best to capture information on life events that do (or do not) happen between panel interviews, amongst *Understanding Society* panel members, to enable in-depth follow-up questions, and
2. To explore under which conditions sample members would be willing to report on life events every month.

Specifically, there were five thematic research questions:

1. Which life events (relating to: health, labour market, pregnancy, moving to a new house, relationships and no changes in circumstances) would panel members be willing to tell ISER about between annual survey interviews?
2. What mode(s) would be best to ask panel members questions between annual survey interviews?
3. How much time would panel members be willing to spend each month engaging with the questions asked between annual survey interviews?
4. What do panel members think is an appropriate incentive for answering questions between annual survey interviews?
5. What is the best way to frame the request for answering questions between annual survey interviews?

2.3 Methodology

This research involved an online text-based forum and a focus group and paired depth interview. The online forum of 32 participants was purposively sampled from the *Understanding Society*

Innovation Panel, Wave 11, amongst respondents who have taken part in the annual survey online. Participants were invited to log-in to a bespoke, user-friendly and moderated online forum, responding to activities and questions from moderators for about 15 minutes a day for five days at a time which was most suitable for them. Participants were encouraged to interact with each other on discussion boards where they commented on discussion topics and responded to posts from their fellow community member.

A focus group of eight participants and a paired depth (which is an interview conducted with two people) were also conducted with individuals who have participated in the annual survey either in-person or online. These discussions further explored some of the emerging themes in the forum and views of people who may be less comfortable taking part in data collection online. See Table 1 for the achieved quotas for the online forum and Table 2 for the achieved quotas for the combined focus group and paired depth.

Table 1 Online forum achieved sample

N= 32		
Wave 11 interview	Web	28
	CAPI (Computer-assisted personal interviewing)	3
Employment Status	Self-employed	4
	In paid employment (Full Time/Part Time)	15
	Self-employed	5
	Unemployed	7
	Retired	5
Children	Have a child aged between 2 -5	8
Moving to a new house	Planning to move or have moved within the last three years	9
Relationship status	Cohabiting	5
	Single	9
	Married	18

Table 2 Combined Focus group and Paired Depth achieved sample

N= 10		
Wave 11 interview	Web	2
	CAPI (Computer-assisted personal interviewing)	8
	Self-employed	0

Employment Status	In paid employment (Full Time/Part Time)	5
	Unemployed	1
	Retired	3
	In full time education	1
Children	Have a child aged between 2 -5	0
Moving to a new house	Planning to move or have moved within the last three years	7
Relationship status	Cohabiting	0
	Single	6
	Married	4

Recruiters briefed participants on the purpose of the study, how their information would be used and offered an opportunity for participants to ask questions before confirming their participation. Online forum participants were prompted to read and agree to a consent to participate form before beginning the forum. Focus group and depth participants signed a consent form before the in-person interviews began.

For the in-person discussions, moderators used a semi-structured discussion guide (see Appendix 10.2). Fieldwork took place in May 2019. Online forum participants received £60 and discussion participants received £50 in appreciation for their time and to encourage participation.

2.4 Data management and analysis

A standardised process of analysis was conducted following fieldwork, and included:

- Creative discussion/brainstorming among the research team led by the Project Director. Researchers referred to notes and recalled fieldwork to identify key themes.
- Systematic content analysis using 'matrix mapping'. This is a well-known analytical process which involves developing an analytical framework comprising the themes of interest, so that data from each group or individual can be attributed to these themes, and comparisons or conclusions about the prevalence of individual views can be made. We use this approach for all larger-scale social research projects as it is well suited for identifying similarities and differences within and between groups.

2.5 Reading this report

This report draws on findings from qualitative research. Due to the flexible and open nature of qualitative methods, this research does not seek to quantify or be generalisable to the overall population but reflects a range of attitudes and preferences of the participants we spoke to.

Throughout the report, verbatim quotes are used to illustrate findings. To provide additional detail, quotes are labelled with gender, age and whether they were participants in the online forum, paired depth or focus group. For example: "Quote." (Male, aged 25-34, Online forum). As there were many overlapping life events, for the purposes of succinctness, we have excluded them from the labelling.

When referring to participants' status as participants of *Understanding Society* they are referenced to as 'panel members'.

3. Acceptability of event-triggered data collection

This section explores the acceptability of event-triggered data collection about specific life events. Facilitators of acceptance included participants' desire to help improve society, the appeal of incentives and the therapeutic benefit for some from discussing and reflecting on personal circumstances. While the concept was generally accepted, willingness to take part was limited by key factors, explored in Chapter 4.

Event-triggered data collection was a broadly accepted concept and a participant's existing relationship with *Understanding Society* influenced their acceptance of event-triggered data collection.

By contributing to the survey, some participants felt they were helping wider society. Generally, these participants had been doing the annual survey for more than five years and tended to be individuals with children or be of retirement age.

"Normally people only get a say at the ballot box once every five years. I feel that by participating in this survey there is some opportunity to influence the formation of policy rather than passively watching it happen."

(Male, 55-64, Online forum)

"I take part in Understanding Society each year because I feel part of the research and like that my views and opinions matter."

(Female, 55-64, Online forum)

Regularly taking part in *Understanding Society* was described as helping to build trust and confidence in the safe and ethical handling of participant data from the annual survey. This attitude supported participant willingness to contribute both to the annual survey and to event-triggered data collection; some participants had confidence their answers would be confidential, and their personal details handled securely.

"I don't really have any concerns and if I did would have ceased responding long ago. I rely and trust the anonymity of the survey."

(Male, 55-64, Online forum)

Additional drivers to participation in event-triggered data collection were the financial incentives and emotional benefits participation offers.

The prospect of additional incentives (such as vouchers or money) appealed to participants motivated to take part in the annual survey because of compensation. Participants commonly assumed that there would be incentives for increased participation and if event-triggered data collection was to be monthly, monthly incentives were welcomed. Younger participants were

especially motivated by the financial element. They tended to connect participation to financial benefits compared to older participants for whom financial gain was more of a bonus. Further details on compensation are in Chapter 8.

*“If we weren’t getting the vouchers we wouldn’t do it [Understanding Society].”
(Female, 25-34, Focus Group)*

A less common attitude was that the annual survey was akin to a therapeutic experience which helped participants to reflect upon their lives and consider changes which had or had not happened. The prospect of regular event-triggered data collection was seen to offer an opportunity to process personal events or to discuss topics which were enjoyable to talk about, such as their jobs or children. It was also seen as being a chance to share exciting news – such as pregnancy, an engagement or a new job.

*“The yearly studies make me realise and reflect upon the year that has passed since the last one. To be able to have said over the years that I have married, had a baby, changed career have been great things to share.”
(Female, 25-34, Online forum)*

*“[I would be] happy to share good news.”
(Female, 45-54, Online forum)*

Except for highly sensitive topics such as bereavement and financial information, few events were spontaneously identified by participants as ‘off limits’.

Generally, participants did not reject the idea of participation on the assumption they would not be asked sensitive questions that would cause discomfort, except for bereavement and finances. These topics were areas which participants were typically reluctant to share openly outside of immediate family and friends.

*“I think financial information, i.e. specific financial data, in-goings, outgoings, would be something I would be reluctant to share in detail.”
(Male, 25-34, Online forum)*

*“My older sister died yesterday, do I want to talk about it? Not really.”
(Male, 55-64, Online forum)*

An event topic can become ‘off limits’ depending upon the individual and the timing of the event. It was therefore difficult for participants to anticipate how they would react to being asked about certain events when they had no prior experience of answering questions about specific, potentially sensitive events. Although they were familiar with the annual survey, event-triggered data collection felt like a different experience.

“Not sure until it happens I guess. Even then how much would I disclose and when would I disclose.” (Male, 65-44, Online forum)

While the concept of event-triggered data collection was generally acceptable, some participants did reject the idea outright.

They were disinterested in the idea from the outset and struggled to picture engaging with it as they felt their involvement in the annual survey was enough. These participants tended to have signed up

to the annual survey because another member of their household was doing it or were completing it annually because of the vouchers.

“I know it is important for you to know when life events happen, but I think once a year is enough.” (Male, 55-64, Online forum)

For those participants who engaged with the concept, their views about the topics of focus for follow-up questions also influenced their willingness to take part.

Responses to the most acceptable topics – moving and work – are explored below. These are followed by the topics participants expressed more reservations about answering – health, children, pregnancy and relationships.

The topic of **moving** was consistently considered a ‘safe’ and acceptable topic to be asked questions about. Participants recognised the need to update their address, so the annual survey could be completed.

No consideration was given to the other circumstance which might trigger a house move, such as a relationship breakdown or job loss. This was due to participants only being able to comment or reflect on events which they have experienced, rather than hypothetical events.

*“I would share moving to a new house with an Understanding Society researcher because the researcher and the team would need to know my new address for future studies”
(Female, 18-24, Online forum)*

The topic of **work** was one of the most acceptable topics to answer additional questions about. It was not considered to be a sensitive topic and for several working participants, it was a source of pride and something they anticipated being happy to answer additional questions about. For working participants, reporting about any changes in hours or work status was not a problem.

*“Unless they left a job due to some circumstances that they didn’t wish to discuss then generally a job change isn’t as much as a ‘sensitive’ subject as may be a medical issue etc.”
(Female, 35-44, Online forum)*

ISER’s intention is that participants would only be asked a one-off question about changes in their work status. The understanding of participants in the study, however, was that they would be asked recurrent questions each month.

Therefore, whilst retired participants recognised retirement as being a significant life change and were happy to report this as a one-off event they did not want to answer repeat questions about their working status beyond that.

A less common view was from those in jobs which were at risk, unhappy in their jobs or unemployed. They expressed some reluctance to work-related data collection. While they did not refuse participation, the level of detail of the work questions may trigger concerns or frustrations because it might remind the participants of their difficult situation. Participants’ understanding was that they would be answering follow up questions even if there had not been a change in their job whereas ISER’s intention is that they would only report if a change in their job happened. They would not be asked every month about their current job.

“I would be prepared to spend less time answering questions about my work because in a nut shell I dislike my job, but it pays the mortgage. I would be prepared to spend 5 minutes answering questions about this topic.” (Female, 45-54, Online forum)

Participants anticipated that they may be unlikely to answer questions about their health, depending upon the timing of the questions. If, for example, they were awaiting test results or had just been diagnosed with a condition, it is unlikely they would respond to questions. This was also anticipated to be the case if an individual's condition was to deteriorate or if they became very ill unexpectedly.

Others saw their health as a topic which they would be unlikely to share regardless of the timing. For these participants, health was a private issue and not one which they were currently accustomed to share widely.

***[Being diagnosed with a health condition]:** I would not share this with a researcher as I think this would depend on the nature of the health condition. If it's very personal and upsetting, then perhaps I wouldn't share this." (Female, 25-34, Online Forum)*

*"Never talk about my personal health really, just a personal thing"
(Male, 65+ Online Forum)*

However, older participants and those with long term health conditions were open to answering additional questions about their **health** because their condition impacted greatly on their life. Participants shared examples of wanting to help others experiencing similar issues. Yet, this willingness was subject to change, as the condition changes.

*"I would be prepared to spend more time answering questions about my health because as you get older this is an important issue. It may help others with a similar condition"
(Female, 65+, Online forum)*

Parents of young **children** expressed a willingness and enthusiasm to answer additional questions about their children because they enjoy speaking about their children.

"I would be prepared to spend more time answering questions about my Children because this is the most interesting topic for me." (Female, 25-34, Online forum)

However, this was not a consistently held view. Concerns about privacy of their children underpinned some participants' views that detailed and potentially intrusive questions about their children was off limits. Older participants with adult children felt less motivated to respond to questions about their children because they felt they had less to contribute since in some cases they were further removed from their children's lives, and they couldn't see the value of this insight for ISER.

"I would be prepared to spend less time answering questions about my children because they have both grown up & left home, so the relevance is limited." (Male, 55-64, Online forum)

Pregnancy was a complex topic with a range of attitudes towards sharing expressed. As with other topics perceived to be especially sensitive, timing of questions about pregnancy was a key concern. For example, because miscarriage is a risk in the first three months and participants felt it wouldn't be appropriate to ask about pregnancy during this timeframe.

“After the nervous 3 months of hoping the pregnancy remains, it would be fine to share with a researcher.” (Female, 35-44, Online forum)

The research did not assume that ISER would only be addressing the question of pregnancy to women within childbearing years and unsurprisingly, pregnancy was dismissed by older participants who either had adult children or were not going to have children. They would not respond to questions about pregnancy and felt ISER should know from their annual survey responses the topic was irrelevant to these participants and therefore not asked.

Pregnancy, like relationships, was a topic that involved more than the participant. Relevant female participants believed their partner would feel the same as they did about answer questions, and answer in the same way. However, examples were shared of male participants who were reluctant to talk about pregnancy because it was their partners’ experience and she should be reporting on it instead of their partner. A risk may be pregnancy related questions are less likely to be answered by men.

“I would not like to share about pregnancy as it would be my wife who would be going through it and not me.” (Male, 45-54, Online forum)

Participants’ understanding was that they would be asked questions about their relationship status on a monthly basis. Reluctance to answering multiple questions about **relationships** were expressed by those in a long-held status. For example, those married or in a relationship for many years, or single for many years, felt it was unnecessary to regularly talk about their status as it was unlikely to change. Participants in long-held statuses anticipated that they would be frustrated by even simple yes or no questions asking whether their relationship status had changed as it was not deemed likely to ever happen.

“I would be prepared to spend less time answering questions about my Relationship because I’m married and that’s unlikely to change.” (Female, 55-64, Online forum)

For others, relationships were considered private and the purpose and value of additional data collection on relationships was unclear.

“I would be least likely to share a change in relationship status as I view this as a personal matter that shouldn’t be used for research purpose.” (Male, 18-24, Online forum)

4. Barriers to engagement with event-triggered data collection

Despite an openness to the idea of event-triggered data collection, willingness to participate was not universally expressed across the sample. While there were few outright rejecters of the idea, as participants' understanding of what would be involved improved, barriers were identified. Barriers included concerns about the burden of their involvement, answering questions about sensitive topics (such as their health and relationship status) which may be distressing, and the confidentiality of their data. This section will explore these barriers in more detail.

Based on experiences of the annual survey, expectations of time and effort was a key concern.

The annual survey, which consists of a long questionnaire, is participants' point of reference for what the event-triggered data collection process may involve. Participants pictured needing to take part in frequent, long interviews, especially given their experience that an answer to one question can trigger multiple new questions. ISER's intention is that follow up questions would involve three to four minutes if they had experienced a change and significantly less (approximately 30 seconds) to report no change.

"And the more you say yes to a question the more you have to answer for that question." (Female, 25-34, Focus Group)

For those who complete the annual survey in person, their concerns related to the logistics of having to schedule an interview each month.

"I would resent a face to face interview, as that would mean having to re-arrange my life." (Male, 25-34, Online forum)

Participants expected ISER would need to tailor any event-triggered data collection, to account for insight from the annual interview about what is relevant for a participant to answer. For example, retired participants who are repeatedly asked if their working status has changed could easily become disengaged and frustrated. Without that reassurance of relevant questioning, participants expressed concern about the burden of regularly answering irrelevant questions.

Given the potential sensitivity of data which may be disclosed, data security and safety was a concern for participants

Trust in the confidentiality of *Understanding Society* was regularly articulated by participants. However, event-triggered data collection was a 'step up' in terms of the kind of data which participants may be asked to share. Additional reassurance is required because of concerns about their responses somehow making it into a public domain and their personal data and personal

responses to questions being accessed without their consent. There is therefore a risk that without sufficient reassurances that participants are reluctant (or refuse) to participate.

“No one from Understanding Society has explained to me what they want this data for and then what they propose to do with it.” (Female, 65+, Online forum)

“If you asked me how I felt about the death of a relative via email I don’t want it as you don’t know who is seeing it... it is big brother sucking information and I don’t think it’s acceptable” (Female, 55-64, Focus Group)

Potential sensitivities to the data collection process were identified and included asking questions too soon after a difficult event had taken place and asking about topics that some participants view as too intrusive.

A common reflection from participants was about distressing participants by asking about a life event too soon after a difficult or challenging event. Gauging how long this time may last is challenging because it will vary between individuals. For example, asking about a health diagnosis may be fine for some a couple weeks after the news, whereas for others they may require more time to process the news and discuss it with a researcher. Topics which were less acceptable for participants to answer questions about are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Participants identified two risks to data collection if these sensitivities are not carefully handled.

Firstly, variable data quality from capturing potentially inaccurate or “overly emotive” responses too soon after they were experienced. While this is always a risk with data collection, the frequency with which participants are expected to engage with event-triggered data collection means the risk may be higher.

“The nearer to the event the response potentially the more initial emotion in answering... Reflecting on getting the diagnosis of a rare brain condition for my five-year-old, I know I would have without meaning to have given different answers depending on how close after the diagnosis it was as the emotion was so much higher nearer to the actual event.” (Female, 35-44, Online forum)

Secondly, low response rates or high dropout rates from distressed participants. Repeated yes or no questions asking whether the same event has happened or not may prompt participants to opt out of data collection. For example, if a participant is trying to get pregnant or change jobs

“If you do too much [event-triggered surveys] you’ll turn people off Understanding Society completely.” (Male, 55-64, Paired Depth)

*“To some, no changes in their life can be a negative e.g. if they are pushing for a promotion and it isn’t happening, or they are trying to move and cannot.”
(Female, 25-34, Online forum)*

We tested some messages prepared by ISER to explore how well they resonated with participants. These messages can be found in Appendix 9.4.

Through testing these messages, participants identified general principles of compelling communications, explored next.

Being upfront in communications about the purpose of and requirements for event-triggered data resonated well with participants

As has been explored in barriers to acceptability, it can easily be assumed that participation will be detailed and time consuming. Upfront communications will need to be transparent about how much time is expected, incentive levels, how they can participate and what kinds of topics they should expect to be asked about. Given the potential sensitivities to navigate, there were also suggestions to offer the choice of deferring a question if it related to a sensitive or difficult time.

“I myself don't have any issues with completing additional life event surveys throughout the year but finding time to complete them within limited timescales is not always possible as my life is sometimes hectic. So maybe give people longer timescales to complete certain tasks.” (Male, Age 35-44, Online forum)

“I think it needs to explain a little on how the events would be recorded either a quick questionnaire or a long one depending on and how long they would have to fill it out.” (Female, 25-34, Online forum)

Clear messaging about the importance and benefits of reporting even when events have not happened is important for maintaining engagement over time.

Participants were informed that reporting when events had not happened was also relevant to *Understanding Society*. In principle, participants were happy to report about ‘non-events’. It was thought that reporting this would be easier as it would not trigger any additional questions. However, reporting that something has not happened is not intuitive as reporting that something has happened. For ‘non-events’ to be reported in practice would require prompting and clear messaging. Participants want to have a clear reasoning as to why they should share this data as it does not instinctively feel interesting or relevant to them.

“I would need to be reassured that the non-event would still aid research and contribute to this.” (Female, 18-24, Online forum)

Those participants which are less engaged with *Understanding Society* were more likely to find reporting ‘non-events’ as burdensome. Their preference was to only reply if they had something to report on and for *Understanding Society* to interpret silence as no change.

*“I would say if you don't hear from me nothing's changed.”
(Male, 65+ Online forum)*

Widespread participant awareness of the uniqueness of their status as ‘panel members’ was limited – raising awareness of their value could be effective.

For older participants who have been doing the survey for longer and have engaged with feedback, the uniqueness of taking part in *Understanding Society* and the value of panel members is a motivating message. These participants tended to have a stronger understanding of how valuable their data is and of the importance of their ongoing contribution.

“I take part in Understanding Society each year because I understand that continuity is important to the information that comes out of the research and feel privileged to contribute in a small way to this process.”
(Male, 55-64, Online forum)

For most of our sample though, the unique status of panel member was not felt strongly. However, there was appetite for knowing more and there is scope for educating panel members about the value of their contribution. Giving a purpose to their participation and being a part of something impactful could be an effective means of engagement.

Understanding Society branding would be welcomed on communications because it is familiar and trusted.

However, despite this trust in the brand, emphasis about anonymity, confidentiality and how data is processed and stored would be valuable additions. They would help to assuage any initial barriers and concerns which are easily reached by participants who are contemplating sharing personal information.

“I’m open & happy to share information, just need to be reassured that it’s safe to share & it is also anonymous.” (Female, 45-54, Online forum)

A strong preference is to be able to ‘opt in’ to research, rather than be opted in by default.

Participants were keen to be able to ‘opt in’ to the data collection because they wanted more control over when they would be contacted and respond to data collection requests.

“I would prefer if you wanted to take part to contact you instead of the other way around. I would sooner have the option to opt in than out as I do have the tendency to forget to do things and find myself committing to things when I just forgot to opt out.” (Female, 45-54, Online forum)

ISER’s motivations for default opt in are likely to do with maximising response rates and minimising administration burden for responding to lots of opt in responses. However, participants reaction to this process in the letter tested suggest some reassurances around the process are needed, or some other flexibility around engagement might be considered, like the ability to occasional defer responses.

Specific messages and themes which participants identified as being key to communicate will now be explored in detail.

‘Participation is confidential and incentivised’

That participation is incentivised is one of the most important messages which could encourage engagement. The incentive was felt to be a clear ‘hook’ to pique interest and to give a clear purpose for participation – particularly for those who are disengaged with *Understanding Society* but may be motivated by financial benefit.

Confidentiality is also key to mention upfront and provides significant reassurance to participants who may be wary about sharing personal details about their life. Concerns about what might happen

to their personal data present easily so upfront reassurance about confidentiality could be beneficial.

“The information that you would be sharing would be highly confidential, so please do not hesitate to participate and in return you will be rewarded with shopping vouchers.” (Male, 45-54, Online forum)

‘Taking part will only take a few minutes of your time’

That participation is a quick process was significant and key to communicate early. Messages need to convey that taking part will not be arduous or burdensome otherwise individuals may easily be put off by the prospect.

“Wish you could make a difference? Want your voice to be heard? The biggest society in the country want to know more about you! A small amount of your time makes a huge difference to our researchers and we'll even compensate you for your time.” (Female, 35-44, Online forum)

‘This is an opportunity to impact on the future of society’

For those participants who are engaged in *Understanding Society* this was a motivating message. Hearing that their contribution is valued and impactful was spontaneously identified by these participants as a key message. The opportunity to have a ‘say’ in society was a special opportunity which it was anticipated would encourage others to sign up to participate.

“Would you like to help shape the future? Are you happy to share about your life events in a confidential way? Your essential information will make a massive difference.” (Female, 35-44, Online forum)

5. Views on the frequency and length of data requests

Participants discussed their attitudes towards how much time they would be prepared to spend answering an initial question and follow up questions about life events, monthly and quarterly. ISER anticipated participants would be open to monthly data collection, with time taken spanning from a couple minutes up to 20 minutes for each life event asked.

The amount of time participants were prepared to spend on a monthly and quarterly basis varied

Unwillingness to participate monthly, or willingness to spend a couple minutes responding to data collection requests monthly was expressed. The less willing were also unlikely to spend more time responding if requests were spaced further apart, like quarterly. Instead, suggesting up to 15 minutes a quarter might be feasible.

“I would be prepared to spend up to 2 minutes a month responding to an initial question about recent life events and answering follow up questions.”

(Male, 35-44, Online forum)

“I would be prepared to spend up to 0 minutes a month responding to an initial question about recent life events and answering follow up questions.”

(Female, 65+, Online forum)

Those less willing to regularly commit time to data collection were more likely to say they participated in *Understanding Society* out of habit or for the compensation. The limited willingness to engage regularly and for enough time to respond to multiple life event questions suggests these participants may not regularly contribute to data requests. If they had to contribute, their preference was to be asked every four to six months for as short a time as possible.

At the other end of the time scale were participants prepared to spend a high proportion of time answering monthly and quarterly questions. Amounts ranged from 60 to 120 minutes a month. Quarterly time commitments were even greater, with 120 minutes and 440 minutes suggested by some participants. Although the willingness to commit time was expressed, participants may not have understood this would be a regular and on-going request and may be less likely to commit this time over the longer-term.

*“I would be prepared to spend up to **120** minutes a **month** responding to an initial question about recent life events **and** answering follow up questions.”*

(Female, 45-54, Online forum)

Willingness to commit this amount was driven by a feeling of being valued by *Understanding Society*, feeling unique as a ‘panel member’ and an appreciation for the opportunity to make a difference to society.

*“I feel my contribution is valued in the survey and I like to help.” (Female, 35-44,
Online forum)*

The most common view was the middle ground; to commit between 10-15 minutes quarterly. Despite the intentions and goodwill to commit monthly, it is likely that busy lives and other priorities would take precedence and a monthly commitment becomes untenable.

Like those willing to commit a high proportion of time, these middle grounders were engaged with *Understanding Society* and invested in its benefit. Though, they appeared to be more pragmatic in what was feasible given their personal circumstances and priorities. Participants working and with young children tended to express this view. Some retirees also shared this sentiment, because they found they were busier in retirement than when in full time employment. As these people’s time is limited, there is a risk monthly requests will be missed in practice.

6. Views on data collection mode

ISER anticipated initial questions about whether a life event had happened could be asked by text message. If a participant experienced one or more events their text message response would trigger a follow-up questionnaire with the invitation to the online survey sent either by text or email. For participants less confident with digital data collection, there may be the option of data collection over the phone or post.

More digitally confident participants tended to prefer e-mail for data collection.

Overall, email was the preferred mode of data collection for digitally confident participants because it was convenient and easy to respond. Employed participants and parents of young children felt e-mail offered a flexibility to answer at a convenient place and time convenient. In practice, ISER will not use e-mail as a mode of data collection but as a mode of inviting respondents to a web survey.

“I find email the easiest way of dealing with most things! My work and home life are fairly hectic, and email enables me to respond in the gaps that are left in between everything else. It's fairly instant and confidential too.”

(Female, 35-44, Online forum)

“Email is always the easiest. But sometimes emails get missed amongst junk mail so a text prompt would be more personal. I prefer not to talk on the phone as most calls I get on my mobile are cold callers so tend to ignore.”

(Female, 35-44, Online forum)

E-mail was also preferred by digitally confident participants because it meant they were more in control. They felt they could take time to construct their answers, when it most suits them. In contrast, responding over the phone or in-person was perceived to place undue pressure to respond quickly.

“Personally, I would prefer to communicate via email as it means there is no urgency for correspondence and wouldn't be as intimidating for some as a face to face/over the phone interview.” (Male, 18-24, Online forum)

The anonymity of email was also favoured by some of those participants concerned about sharing personal and sensitive information.

“[E-mail] is more anonymous, so I feel like I can be more open than I would if I was talking to an actual person.” (Female, 35-44, Online forum)

We explored other data collection modes with these participants, but they were not keen on a telephone call. It was described as intrusive, had negative associations with nuisance calls and participants were unlikely to respond to an unknown number.

“I often don't answer unknown numbers.” (Female, 35-44, Online forum)

Yet, concerns about the sensitivity of a topic, participants' confidence with reading and writing and their confidence with digital underpinned some preferences for in-person or telephone data collection.

Among those concerned about sharing sensitive information was the view these should be asked in-person or on the phone because a trusted interviewer could sympathise and encourage engagement.

*"[A] telephone call and personal interview is "two way", provided trust is established a skilled interviewer can gain (extract) more information possibly."
(Male, 65-44, Online forum)*

Verbal expression was preferred over written responses for participants with some learning difficulties, like dyslexia, and participants with a first language other than English. E-mail or text message responses were seen to be more difficult for them to engage with, and the meaning of their responses may be missed.

"I proffer (sic) to speak to people as I can explain what I want to say." (Female, 45-54, Online forum)

"I have chosen the e-mail method for all of the options. This is because, as a university student, I find using a computer very convenient and I'm most likely to respond faster through this method." (Female, 18-24, Online forum)

Participants less confident online shared their distrust of digital data collection and concerns about the safety of their information. Responding by telephone or in-person reassured them of the anonymity of their identity and security of their responses. Telephone was also preferred to receive a paper questionnaire because it was more efficient, and personable. Answering (potentially) sensitive questions via letter or paper felt "formal" and "dry".

"My information is safer [face to face]." (Female, 55-64, Focus group)

The difference in preferred mode was also influenced by how a participant takes part in the annual survey.

Participants who complete the annual survey in-person had a stronger preference to complete event-triggered data collection through in person interviews compared to those who completed the annual survey online who tended to prefer e-mail. This preference was felt most acutely by those who had had the annual survey conducted by the same interviewer for more than one year running. These participants had built a kind of relationship with their interviewer as there was a familiarity there. They could imagine sharing sensitive information with them, if asked and struggled to picture it sharing it with an unknown researcher, even if they were being asked in-person.

"I look at them [Understanding Society] as researchers. So, when they come to my house I feel safe. I've had one interviewer for a number of years." (Female, 35-44, Focus group)

There was little appetite across the sample for responding by text message beyond the initial question or a reminder to take part in the event-triggered data collection.

There was some appetite amongst the digitally confident for text messages but only for prompts and very simple (such as yes or no) questions. Amongst those who were not confident online, text messages were similarly seen as too impersonal and a less appropriate method for answering

complex questions. Participants also flagged limitations of using text messages for collecting their responses: Text messages can be easily forgotten or missed and there are no formal identifiers of the sender like with email, so they are more likely to be dismissed as spam.

*“A text message seems so [impersonal]...it could be anyone asking the question.”
(Female, 35-44, Online forum)*

Alternative suggestions for data collection included an online forum or an app where participants can log on at times which suit them and contribute as much or as little as they wished.

This was particularly appealing to those who wanted the ability to defer their answers to a later date. This may be because they are particularly busy or experiencing a difficulty or trauma that they do not feel comfortable sharing yet.

“Anonymous Forum like this one would be even better / where you drop in and out as needed.” (Female, 45-54, Online forum)

It's worth noting that participant's involvement in the online forum may have influenced their attitude towards forums and has given them the impression of how it could work based on a single experience.

7. Views on compensation for participation

Understanding Society respondents receive vouchers for participating in the annual survey. For event-triggered data collection, it was anticipated that a small financial compensation would be acceptable for each data collection encounter. We explored a range of compensation options with participants, from cash and charitable donations to non-financial compensation like knowledge of how participant's input has benefited society. We also explored expectations of incentive value for time spent responding to data collection requests.

Participants unanimously expected a financial incentive of some form for contributing to event-triggered data collection, with some high expectations of value for time spent that may not be financially viable for ISER to fund.

The annual survey sets a precedent for financial compensation for participation, and participants drew upon that experience when sharing their expectations of compensation. Participant ideas of the form of financial compensation varied: cash, vouchers, entered in a money prize draw, store discounts and charitable donations.

"[The questionnaire] is time consuming, to do it more than once a year, twice a year at a push, for virtually nothing is just not worth it, unless you are altruistic and want to give loads of information away, or you are in this position and have relatively large amounts of time, or if a few quid would help you." (Male, 55-64, Paired Depth)

Overall, cash and vouchers were preferred, for different reasons. Vouchers can be put towards a 'treat' rather than becoming a part of typical spending, as cash does, and were preferred by parents. Cash is flexible and convenient for all and can be used how participants wish.

"I tend towards a voucher because then I have to spend it on something specific whereas cash just tends to get hoovered up in the general day to day expenditure." (Male, 55-64, Online forum)

Younger participants and those who described a more passive engagement with *Understanding Society* explained incentives were the main reason they took part in the annual survey, and thus the reason they'd engage with event-triggered data collection.

"I take part in Understanding Society each year because of the incentives." (Male, 45-54, Online forum)

While less of a motivation for regularly engagement in event-triggered data collection, non-financial compensation like receiving detailed updates on the benefit of participants contribution to *Understanding Society* was an interesting, additional benefit. Inter-wave mailings around the annual

survey are valued by some and receiving something like this related to the event-triggered data collection would be appreciated.

*“I would be really interested in reading a summary of the report that you produce (I assume that you produce one for someone?) and email would be the most convenient way - or perhaps a link to a website.”
(Female, 35-44, Online forum)*

A range of views about the amount of time required to trigger compensation were shared. This included compensation for any time, after a few minutes of input through to an hour of participant’s time.

Among our sample were those that expected an incentive for any amount of time committed, irrespective of how little time. Taking the time to answer questions was being akin to working. event-triggered data collection was anticipated to be a chore and not something which they were prepared to do for free. These participants wanted an incentive for as little as five minutes a month or a quarter.

“I don’t work for free.” (Male, 25-34, Online forum)

When the amount of time required to participate increased so did expectations around the incentive. When more than 30 minutes a month was suggested, expectations of an appropriate incentive reached upwards of £20-£30.

“If it’s [the quarterly questionnaire] a simple thing that takes 30 seconds, it probably doesn’t make a difference, and you can’t really expect much for that. If you are doing something that takes half an hour, and hour, you must have a decent reward.” (Male, 55-64, Paired Depth)

An incentive is necessary but unlikely to be enough for regular responses to data collection requests.

Ultimately, while incentives are motivating they are never going to be enough to guarantee regular participation outside the annual interview because of the time burden. The amounts offered are an appreciated financial boost but are neither a source of steady income or sufficiently large enough to make them a sole motivator. Whether an individual chooses to participate in either the annual survey or event-triggered questionnaires will depend on a combination of factors, including the incentive and their other motivations for taking part such as purpose of *Understanding Society*, trust in the research team, ease of participation and available time. A combination of approaches is required to maximise engagement like compelling communications, convenient and flexible approach to taking part and tailoring questions and modes to individuals.

8. Conclusions and recommendations

Participants were generally accepting of event-triggered data collection, with few rejections to topics within specific life events rather than to the concept overall. No topics were completely off limits, but variation in acceptability of each life event was influenced by relevance of the event to the participant, assumptions about depth and sensitivity of follow-up questions and timing of the data collection request. Overall, participants were more open to answering detailed questions about moving to a new house and work than health, relationships and pregnancy.

A combination of modes of data collection, tailored to participant preferences, look best for maximising engagement. Email was preferred for those confident with digital tools and who completed the annual survey online, whereas telephone was preferred for those less digitally confident and who completed the annual survey either in-person or over the telephone. Beyond issuing reminders and asking a couple yes or no questions, text message is less appropriate for regular data collection. Though, text message might be the easiest option for those participants with no life events to report.

Amount of time participants are willing to spend answering questions is a mixed picture. It involves both the time for a one-off data collection encounter and the collective time for answering multiple data collection requests outside the annual interview. Overall, participants seemed willing to spend 10-15 minutes on an individual data collection response, if they are clear on the purpose and value, find the questions relevant and easy to respond to and are financially compensated. There is a risk that multiple requests in a year, and requests that take more than 10-15 minutes to respond to, will be too burdensome and participants will disengage.

Financial incentive (cash or vouchers) is the clear winner for compensation, though additional compensation, like news of impacts or entry into a prize draw, to complement financial incentives was desired. Incentive values expectations ranged from nothing for up to 15 minutes to £1 a minute. Without a clearer understanding of the exact ask, participants struggled to agree on an average amount. More research is needed to explore incentive value once the parameters of event-triggered data collection are established.

Key recommendations from our research include:

- Highlight the purpose and benefits of event-triggered data collection, especially to encourage people to respond when they do not have developments to report
- Manage expectations for event-triggered data collection to distinguish it from experiences of the length, depth and mode of participating in the annual survey. Be clear about how much time is likely required, the types of questions asked and reassure about anonymity and confidentiality

- If possible, consider communicating to participants that involvement in event-triggered data collection may reduce the length of the annual survey
- Include supportive messages around the request e.g. *We recognise this topic might be difficult for some people to reflect on depending on their circumstances*
- Consider the feasibility of the incentive plan because incentives will be essential for initial engagement, and maintaining responses over time
- Consider how to practically administer data collection at most every three months with a time requirement of around 20 minutes, which means necessarily prioritising some life events over others
- Tailor as much as possible to personalise the request and avoid repetitive, irrelevant data collection requests. For example, identify proxy measures in the annual survey to target event-triggered data collection or withhold specific questions to some respondents
- Allow some flexibility in data collection approaches, if possible give a choice of responding by email or telephone and the choice to defer responses to a later date
- Build on this research and conduct feasibility testing for the prototype event-triggered data collection approach

9. Appendix

9.1 Full research objectives

Thematic research questions	Sub-questions	Topics of focus
<p>1. Which life events would panel members be willing to tell ISER about between annual survey interviews?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What life events are off limits and why? 2. What life events would respondents deliberately not report and why? 3. How soon after an event happened would Respondents be willing to report them to ISER? 4. How often are respondents willing to be asked about life events, and does this differ by type of life event? 5. Are respondents willing to be asked about all life events every month? 6. For each type of event – what specific aspects are respondents more/less willing to report and why? 7. Do respondents views change if ISER were to ask about expected/intended events, rather than actual? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health: Onset of conditions; Diagnosis; Hospital stays; Days off work; any other? • Labour market: unemployment, employment, “inactive” (retirement, into full-time education, looking after house/family, long-term ill); within a state (job changes, change between employment/self-employment, from looking after house/family to retirement, from retirement to employment/self-employment, etc) • Pregnancy • Moving to a new house • Relationships: New relationships / joiner to household; Splits; [formal marital status change, but also informal status change (e.g., cohabitation)] • None – no changes since last annual survey
<p>2. What mode(s) would be best to ask questions panel</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would Respondents do it? 2. Would Respondents feel 	<p>Relevant modes for</p>

<p>members are willing to answer between annual survey interviews?</p>	<p>comfortable taking part this way?</p> <p>3. Would it be convenient?</p> <p>4. Would it be quick?</p> <p>5. Do Respondents have any concerns about security of data when reporting in the different modes?</p>	<p>discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to a survey • 1 or more Questions sent by SMS • Link to online interview sent by SMS • Link to online interview sent by Email • Telephone call to ask
<p>3. How much time would panel members be willing to spend each month engaging with the questions asked between annual survey interviews?</p> <p>3b. Time spent by type of question – initial event question and any follow up questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do respondents feel about answering questions about life events monthly, quarterly? • How much time would Respondents be willing to spend in one sitting on answering questions about life events? • How much time would respondents be willing to spend in one sitting on answer follow up questions about a life event? 	<p>NA</p>
<p>4. What do panel members think is an appropriate incentive for answering questions between annual survey interviews?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do respondents expect to receive as compensation for their time in answering questions between annual survey interviews? • How much incentive would panel members expect to receive for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly questions - Quarterly questions <p>What is the minimum incentive panel members would expect to receive for answering questions</p>	

	about their life events?	
5 What is the best way to frame the request for answering questions between annual survey interviews?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What messages are influential to panel members agreeing to respond to life event questions? • What messages are influential to panel members stating they have experienced NONE of the life events? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing their lives? • Collecting data for science? • Improving the survey experience, development towards shorter but more frequent questionnaires? • Reducing the need to recall events in the annual interview?

9.2 Event-triggered data collection Discussion Guide

1. Introduction

(5 minutes)

Introduce research, reassure about confidentiality and set tone of discussion

Warm up and introduction

- Introduce moderator and Kantar
- Research on behalf of ISER (Institute for Social and Economic Research), the research team responsible for *Understanding Society*
- Explain they have all have something in common – they are all respondents of the survey *Understanding Society*
- Aim of the discussion is to understand their views and attitudes about sharing information on developments in their life outside of their annual *Understanding Society* interview – what we are referring to as life events
- This information will be used by ISER to develop an approach to learning about developments to your life outside of the annual interview, and help ensure the approach is appropriate and feasible for you to engage with
- Group length – 90 minutes
- Confidentiality and anonymity - All information given will be kept confidential and will only be accessible by Kantar’s research team. Kantar will not link participants’ names with any information they give. Personal details and identifying information (such as name) will be removed.
- Voluntary – Research is voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw at any time and participation will not affect their current or future relationship with ISER

- Privacy Policy: Please note that Kantar’s privacy policy can be accessed online, just search for 'Kantar Privacy Policy' or you can visit: uk.kantar.com/surveys
- Any questions?

Recording

Ask participant for permission to record, then start recording and confirm consent

2. Warm up (10 minutes)

To learn about participants’ context and their background and their relationship with Understanding Society, and to understand how life events are defined and what triggers certain life events to be shared ‘publicly’ (e.g. on social media) by the participants

Introduction from each participant

- Name, age, how they spend their time in a typical week
- How long they have been participating in Understanding Society
- Why they participate in Understanding Society
- How they typically take part in Understanding Society (phone / face to face / online)

Moderator to explain that we are particularly interested in discussing key ‘life events’ today

- Since January, what personal milestone events have happened to them or to someone they know (*Moderator to collect responses on a flipchart*)
 - These can be any personal milestone – positive or negative
- Events have they shared ‘more widely’ - with colleagues or posted on social media
 - Explore motivations for sharing beyond their friends/family
 - When do they share details of life events e.g. immediately, after some time?
 - Reasons for not sharing ‘more widely’, beyond friends/family

3. Life event ranking (30 minutes)

To explore how participants feel about sharing details of their life events with Understanding Society; whether certain life events are more/less comfortable to share and to deep dive into their reactions to sharing certain life events

Moderator to explain that Understanding Society researchers want to learn about their life events closer to when they happen, and outside of the annual interview. Capturing data closer in time to when life events have (or haven’t) happened would benefit the quality of data collected, and ultimately the analysis conducted.

- Immediate reaction
- Expectations for ease of taking part
 - Straightforward/difficult – how/why
 - Time it could take to respond

- Information needs before taking part – spontaneous then prompt:
 - Why they're being asked to participate
 - How data is used
 - How often they'll be asked for information
 - Number of questions they will be asked for each life event
 - Types of questions they might be asked for each life event
 - Impact of follow up questions – does the thought of in-depth follow up questions put them off from sharing personal events

Card sorting task - Moderator to separate group into two teams of four and distribute cards with life events related to topics of focus printed for all the group to reference. Blank cards will also be included in case there are sub-topics / other areas which participants feel should be included.

*As teams, each group must order the life events from those they would be **most comfortable** to share with a researcher as part of survey questions to those they would be **least comfortable** to share. As a group they will be asked to explain their order and the moderator will encourage participants from the other team to question and challenge.*

Moderator to ask the following prompts for both highest ranked life events – most comfortable to share details with a researcher and lowest ranked life events - least comfortable to share details with a researcher.

- **Ease** of agreeing the most/least comfortable to share events and **reasons** for ranking the way they did
 - Explore commonalities / differences / tensions in the group
- Explore what might **influence willingness** to share life events with research team
 - Significance of time between life event happening and being asked about it
 - Time it might take to complete
 - Frequency of requests
 - Time of day / month / year of request
 - Type / detail of information requested
 - Participant circumstance
 - Method of sharing information (SMS, email, phone call, website, postal, face to face)
 - Explore what could be done to **address these challenges** if they occur
- Does being asked about expected/intended events **rather than** actual events have an impact
 - Explore why
- Whether/how views change if they were asked **to confirm life events had not happened**

Then, turn to the lowest ranked life events and explore what aspects of these life-events they would be least willing to share with a researcher. Explore barriers and solutions for overcoming barriers.

- Explore the key **barriers to sharing** these life events with researchers [*Moderator to record on flipchart*]
 - Personal concerns/hesitations about sharing
 - How might other Understanding Society participants feel about sharing – explore whether/how it differs to their own views
 - Life events which are 'off limits' to share

- Aspects/details of a life event which are ‘off limits’
- Circumstances which could make them less willing to share
- For each barrier identified, **discuss solutions** to overcome these
 - Reassurances about processes
 - Time available to complete/respond
 - Type of questions asked
 - Option to participate at a later date
 - Value of participation
 - Compensation/Incentive

Non-events

- What would encourage participation when have nothing to report
- What should Understanding Society consider when participants have nothing to update on
 - Any sensitivities (e.g. pregnancy)
 - Suggestions to overcome

5. Timing, mode and incentives

(15 minutes)

To explore how much time participants would be willing to give to respond to questions outside of annual interview, whether/how this is impacted by their chosen method to answer the questionnaires, and what would help them engage

Moderator explain the idea that participants might be contacted by the research team throughout the year with some questions about certain life events that have and haven't happened. Depending on their responses, they may then receive a follow up questionnaire.

- Explore **how often** they would be willing to be asked about all life events
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Every 6 months
- Influence of **type of life event** on how often they would be willing to respond
- Expectations of **time required** to answer questions if nothing to report / something to report
 - What would be their ideal amount of time
- **How much time** do they anticipate being willing to spend answering follow up questions
 - How does this differ for different life events
 - Does closeness to life event impact – how and why

Mode of participation

- **Preferred mode** of responding to the initial question of whether they have experienced a life event
 - SMS
 - Link to online interview sent by SMS
 - Link to online interview sent by e-mail
 - Telephone call
 - Paper survey

- In person interview
- **Preferred mode** of answering follow up questions related to their recent life event
 - SMS
 - Link to online interview sent by SMS
 - Link to online interview sent by e-mail
 - Telephone call
 - Paper survey
 - In person interview
 - Explore whether this differs depending on life event and why
- Whether/what **modes to avoid**
- Do the modes **raise any concerns** about the security of their data
 - Do different modes raise different concerns – explore
- Influence of **type of life event** on mode

Incentives

- **Expectations for compensation** of their time
 - Type of compensation
 - Explore responses to compensation of £5/month £5-10/quarter – motivator/barrier etc
 - Probe on monthly versus quarterly compensation and acceptability
- Explore whether/how **compensation differs** depending on whether they are:
 - Recording non-events
 - Recording life events
 - Answering follow up questions

6. Encouraging responses to life event questions (15 minutes)

To understand what language participant's think should be used to encourage people take part, and how they think participation should be framed

Moderator to split group into two teams of four. Participants are asked to pretend that they are in the client, (ISER)'s shoes. They need to think about how they would encourage people to take part. Moderator to remind group that they want people to answer a short monthly questionnaire and to answer follow up questions if they answer that they have recently experienced a life event but that reporting when a life event has not happened is also important.

- What 1-2 phrases would they include to encourage participation – what is your hook?
- To encourage participation, **what key information** needs to be communicated
 - What would they focus on and why

7. Message testing (10 minutes)

To explore reactions to potential messages and to further explore language which resonates

Message testing task - Moderator to distribute two messages in rotation for review

For each message, explore:

- Who would agree to take part and who wouldn't, if we were really asking participation now
- Features in the message that compel them to take part
- Features in the message that puts them off from taking part
- Suggestions for changes/improvements
 - What's missing
 - What to remove
- What would you change to encourage you/people like you to participate

8. Thanks and close

(5 minutes)

- What is one thing you would need to answer a questionnaire for the Understanding Society research team about whether a life event **has** happened each month
- What is one thing that would still encourage you to answer a questionnaire about life events, to report that **none of the events** have happened to you that month?
- Incentive payment (PayPal/PERKS)

KANTAR

Event Triggered Activity Transcript

#A1: Day One: About you

#A2: Day Two: Sharing life events with researchers

#A3: Day Three: Reasons to participate

#A4: Day Four: Ways of taking part

#A5: Day Five: Time to reflect

Activity:

Day One: About you

Reference:	#A1
Activity Dates:	Started May 14, 2019 and ended May 20, 2019
Response Visibility:	Responses are hidden until activity is completed
Segment Visibility:	All Participants

Task 1: Consent and privacy

Day One: About you

Reference:	#T1-8
Type:	Prompt
Required:	Yes
Segment Visibility:	All Participants

Please read the following information.

Taking part

Taking part in this research involves taking part in an online forum, moderated by a research team at Kantar. Details of the moderators can be found on the landing page. The forum will run over five days, with new questions, activities and topics for discussion introduced daily. You can enter the dialogue at any point in the day to engage for as long or as little as you like, but we would expect that it will take at least 15 minutes a day, on average. Your name will be anonymised in the online forum, with pseudonyms used.

Withdrawal

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason and without penalty. If you wish to withdraw, you simply need to notify the researchers.

Data security and access

Study staff will protect your personal information closely so no one will be able to connect your responses and any other information that identifies you. Directly identifying information (e.g. names, addresses) will be safeguarded and maintained under controlled conditions. You will not be identified in any publication from this study. Any personal information that could identify you will be removed or changed before files are shared with other researchers or results are made public.

Access to data is restricted to the appropriate personnel. All electronic data and media are securely disposed of via an authorised third party partner. Kantar and ISER comply with the General Data Protection Regulations. ISER at the University of Essex is the data controller for the study. The research for this study is contracted to Kantar, who act as the data processors. The forum platform and all data collected on it are hosted on a secure cloud-based server in the UK.

Since the Understanding Society study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and both the ESRC and the University of Essex are Public Bodies, we use Public Task as the lawful basis for processing this data. Data are not transferred outside the European Economic Area (EEA), to ensure that they are protected by the strong EEA data protection laws. Our compliance with all the relevant legislation, and our externally certified accreditation to the international ISO27001 standard, provide you with assurance that your data is secured and protected in the strongest possible manner.

Concerns and complaints

If you have any concerns about any aspect of the study or you have a complaint, please contact us via private message.

Informed consent

By clicking on the continue button below you will be confirming that you have read this information and agree to take part in the forum.

Next steps

Please click on the Continue button below to confirm you have read the information here and are happy to proceed. If you have any questions about participating, please contact us via private message.

OPTIONS:

- Continue

Task 2: Ground rules: Please read these before continuing

Day One: About you

Reference:	<u>#T1-10</u>
Type:	Prompt
Required:	Yes
Segment Visibility:	All Participants

Welcome to day one of the online community!

Throughout the course of the next five days we will be asking you to complete a range of tasks relating to 'life events'. We are interested to hear your thoughts and opinions on sharing information about life events with Understanding Society.

Please read the following ground rules before continuing and please respect these throughout the duration of the community.

1. Be honest in your answers - there are no right or wrong answers
2. Do not use inappropriate or offensive language
3. We encourage you to respond to comments from your fellow participants but remember to be respectful at all times
4. Please respect that this is a confidential and safe space for all involved. Do not share what you read on the forum anywhere externally.

5. If you have any questions or issues please direct them to the moderators via the [private message function](#)
6. Please log in each day and complete your assigned tasks. Failure to do so will affect your incentive.

Please click continue to confirm that you have read these ground rules and agree to comply with them throughout the duration of the online community.

OPTIONS:

- Continue

Task 3: Tell us about yourself!

Day One: About you

Reference:	#T1-6
Type:	Multimedia
Required:	Yes
Segment Visibility:	All Participants
Attachment Limit:	No Limit

Your first activity is to tell us about yourself - we want to get to know you! Tell us how you spend your time and what things are important to you. For example work / study / family / any hobbies etc.

You can type your answer in the box below, or you can introduce yourself with a video!

Task 4: Understanding Society & You

Day One: About you

Reference:	#T1-2
Type:	Fill the Blanks
Required:	Yes
Segment Visibility:	All Participants

We are interested in your participation in Understanding Society. Please tell us about:

- How long have you been participating in the survey?
- What made you take part in the first place?
- Why do you participate each year?

To answer these questions, please fill in the blanks in the box below.

I have been taking part in Understanding Society for

1. How many years have you been taking part in Understanding Society? years

I agreed to take part in Understanding Society because **2. Why did you agree to participate in Understanding Society?**

I take part in Understanding Society each year because **3. Why do you take part in Understanding Society each year?**

BLANKS (3)

1. How many years have you been taking part in Understanding Society?

2. Why did you agree to participate in Understanding Society?

Type: Plain Text

3. Why do you take part in Understanding Society each year?

Type: Plain Text

Task 5: Sharing life events with Understanding Society

Day One: About you

Reference: #T1-9
Type: Poll
Selections: Single
Allow Other: Yes
Required: Yes
Segment Visibility: All Participants

We would now like to explore how you feel about sharing life events with Understanding Society.

Each year, Understanding Society asks participants about key events that might have happened since they last took part in the study. Understanding Society would like to explore whether participants would be willing to share information about life events closer in time to when they happen. By this we mean outside of and in addition to the annual interview.

How would you feel about sharing life events more regularly with Understanding Society?

OPTIONS:

- I would be happy to share my life events with Understanding Society outside of the annual interview
- I would prefer not to share my life events with Understanding Society outside of the annual interview
- The type of life event would influence how I feel about sharing with Understanding Society
- Other, please specify

Task 6: How do you feel about sharing these life events?

Day One: About you

Reference:	<u>#T1-4</u>
Type:	Sort & Rank
Required:	Yes
Segment Visibility:	All Participants
Randomize Cards:	Yes
Randomize Groups:	Yes
Card Use Limit:	At least 8

This is the final task of the day - nearly there for day one!

For this task, we would like to understand how you feel about sharing **certain life events** with Understanding Society.

We have included some examples of life events on the cards below. We would like you to sort the cards into two groups. Cards can be grouped by dragging them into the box with a plus sign below the two groups or by clicking on the card and selecting a group from the two options.

The two groups we would like you to sort cards into are:

- Those you would be **likely** to share with Understanding Society
- Those you would be **unlikely** to share with Understanding Society

If there are life events which you feel are missing from the list please let us know in the discussions section at the bottom of the page.

CARDS:



New job / Promotion



Change in employment status (e.g. becoming unemployed)



Retiring



Pregnancy



Moving house



A change in relationship status



Being diagnosed with a health condition



Having a health condition which impacts on daily life

GROUPS:

Likely to share with researchers

No min or max



No Ranking Labels

Unlikely to share with researchers

No min or max



No Ranking Labels

Activity:

Day Two: Sharing life events with researchers

Task 1: Welcome back

Thank you for joining us for day two!

Today we will be looking in more detail at specific life events. We will be exploring whether you feel differently about certain life events and why.

It should not take you much longer than 15 minutes to complete today's activities. However, if you would like to spend longer, please do! And remember, you can swap thoughts and feedback with your other community participants in the discussion area of the forum.

Please press continue at the bottom of the page to continue to today's tasks.

OPTIONS:

- Continue



Dear Alex,

Life doesn't happen to a timetable, does it?

We interview you once a year, but life can change at any time. We'd like to ask you about things like health, having children, relationships, moving house, and jobs between surveys, to get more accurate information about the life you have right now.

- Every person we interview has different experiences and it's really important that we capture when important events in your life are taking place. It gives us a more rounded picture of who you are as an individual and what is happening in your household.

- Sometimes life can change very quickly or unexpectedly. Knowing how you feel about life changes and what you do is important. You'll be helping us understand how different people navigate through life.
- Your life is just as interesting and useful to us if nothing's changed, so it's good to tell us that, too.

If you're willing to be contacted by us in addition to your annual survey, then you do not need to reply to this letter. If you would prefer not to participate (or be contacted), please contact us on (Freephone number) or by sending us an e-mail or completing the enclosed opt-out slip and returning it to the freepost address below.

Yours Sincerely,

Understanding Society

Task 3: Sharing health developments

You may remember that on day one, you told us which life events you felt more comfortable sharing with Understanding Society and those you would not. We will now look at five areas - health, work, relationships, moving and family in more detail because there are lots of different life events which can happen, some of which you may feel more comfortable to share than others.

Using the table below, please click to indicate which events relating to your **health** you **would share** with Understanding Society and those which **you would not** share.

COLUMNS:

- I would share this with a researcher
(0)
- I would not share this with a researcher
(0)

ROWS:

- Taking days off work due to ill health
- Having a stay in hospital
- Being referred to hospital for tests
- Being diagnosed with a health condition
- Recovering from a long term health condition

Task 4: Sharing work developments

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Activity Transcript - Event Triggered

Thank you for telling us how you feel about sharing your health events. We would now like to ask you about **work**.

Using the table below, please click to indicate which events relating to your work **you would share** with a researcher and those which **you would not** share.

COLUMNS:

- I would share this with a researcher
(0)
- I would not share this with a researcher
(0)

ROWS:

- Getting a promotion
- Starting a new job
- Leaving a job
- Becoming unemployed
- Changing the number of hours you work
- Becoming a stay at home parent
- Becoming self-employed

Task 5: Sharing relationship developments and house moves

Thank you for telling us so much about all of these different topics. As you may remember from the letter, **relationship developments** and **house moves** are also a particular area of interest for Understanding Society.

Using the table below please click to indicate which events relating to your relationship and your housing status you **would share** with a researcher and those which **you would not** share.

COLUMNS:

- I would share this with an Understanding Society researcher
(0)
- I would not share this with an Understanding Society researcher
(0)

ROWS:

- New relationship
- Getting engaged
- Getting married
- Moving in with a partner
- Moving house
- Buying a house with a partner
- Breaking up with a partner
- Moving out of accommodation previously shared with a partner

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Task 6: Sharing family developments

The final area which Understanding Society are interested in is your **family**.

Using the grid below, please tick to indicate which life events **you would** be comfortable to share with a researcher and those which you **would not** be comfortable.

If there are any additional topics relating to the area of children which you feel we have missed please let us know via private message.

COLUMNS:

- I would share this with a researcher
(0)
- I would not share this with a researcher
(0)

ROWS:

- Becoming pregnant / partner becoming pregnant
- Having a child
- Becoming a step parent

Activity:

Day Three: Reasons to participate

Task 1: Welcome back to day three

Welcome back to day three and the half way point of the online community!

Thank you for all of your responses so far. We really appreciate all that you have been sharing so far and we're excited to discover even more!

Today, we will be looking at how you feel about Understanding Society asking you to share information about your life events. We want to know if there is anything which makes you want to take part or anything which puts you off.

We hope you enjoy today's tasks. Don't forget to look in the discussions section for additional questions and the opportunity to interact with your fellow community members. And if there is anything you would like to share in addition to the answers you give, you can always send us a private message.

Please press continue at the bottom of the page to continue to today's tasks.

OPTIONS:

- Continue

Task 2: Why life events?

For your first task today we would like you to think about why Understanding Society want this information about your life events.

Think back to what you've seen over the past two days. Remember that the purpose of this community is to explore how you feel about sharing life events with Understanding Society. Using the fill in the blanks function below, please tell us:

- Why you think Understanding Society want this information?
- What you think this additional information will be used for?

I think Understanding Society wants this information about my life events because

1. Why do you think Understanding Society want information about your life events?

I think that Understanding Society will use this additional information to

2. What do you think this additional information will be used for?

Task 3: What do you think of these statements?

For your next task, we would like to think about some of the reasons to share life events. We want to understand what might motivate you to answer additional questions throughout the year.

You will find below a number of statements with reasons to participate. Using drag and drop, please sort the statements below into three groups:

- Those which **make you want** to participate
- Those which **put you off** from wanting to participate
- Those which **have no impact** on you
- Those which give you **mixed feelings**

When you have done this, please use the text box below to write what you would say to a friend to encourage them to respond to a short survey asking whether or not a life event has occurred.

CARDS:

It will help provide a more rounded picture of me as an individual

It will help Understanding to Society understand how different people respond to life events

It will help give a better idea of the kinds of life events which happen regularly

It will help the government to understand where there is need so policies can be targeted

It will help improve the research Understanding Society does

It will help make my annual Understanding Society survey easier to complete

It will help make my annual Understanding Society survey more tailored to me

Makes me want to take part

No min or max



No Ranking Labels

Has no impact on me

No min or max



No Ranking Labels

Puts me off wanting to take part

No min or max



No Ranking Labels

Gives me mixed feelings

No min or max



No Ranking Labels

Task 4: How much time should there be after an event?

To gather information soon after a life event has happened will be very important for Understanding Society. The sooner it is reported that a life event has happened, the more valuable the data.

How do you feel about sharing life events with Understanding Society soon after they have happened?

Use the grid below to indicate how soon after a life event you would be willing to answer questions from Understanding Society.

COLUMNS:

- 1 week after event

(0)

- 2 weeks after event

(0)

- 3 weeks after event

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Activity Transcript - Event Triggered

(0)

- 4 weeks after event

(0)

- Up to 3 months after event

(0)

- Up to six months after event

(0)

- Never

ROWS:

- Change in work status
- Change in relationship
- Change in health
- Becoming pregnant / partner becoming pregnant

Task 5: Share your queries and concerns

As you are progressing through the online community you are learning more and more about what Understanding Society is hoping to achieve. We want to know what you think about this.

What questions or concerns do you have about Understanding Society asking additional questions throughout the year about certain life events?

Answer in the text box below or you can upload a video response.

Task 6: Life events which are off limits to share

It's the final activity of the day! Take a moment to think about all of the life events you have just reviewed... Are there any which are completely **off limits** to share with a researcher?

Please click on the Continue button below to be redirected to the Discussions section. Here you can share your opinions and thoughts on off limits life events, as well as see what your fellow participants think too. Please post your own view and comment on another view which is already there.

OPTIONS:

- Continue

Activity:

Day Four: Ways of taking part

Task 1: Welcome to day four

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Activity Transcript - Event Triggered

Welcome back to day four!

Today we will be looking into some of the practical elements of answering additional questions about life events for Understanding Society.

It should not take you much longer than 15 minutes to complete today's activities. However, if you would like to spend longer, please do! And remember, you can swap thoughts and feedback with your other community participants in the discussion area.

Please press continue at the bottom of the page to continue to today's tasks.

OPTIONS:

- Continue

Task 2: Taking part

As we have said, today we are going to focus on 'practical' things. Imagine that Understanding Society are getting in touch to ask you about life events. They will ask you an initial question and then depending on your answer, some more follow up questions.

How do you want to answer questions? Would this vary depending on the life event you are being asked about? Please look at the different options for participation below and select your preference for each life event. You can choose up to 3 ways of taking part for each life event so let us know your favourites.

COLUMNS:

- Letter
(0)
- Phone call
(0)
- E-mail
(0)
- Text message
(0)
- In person interview
(0)

ROWS:

- Health developments
- Family developments
- Relationship developments
- Work developments
- House moves

Task 3: Amount of time you give

Thank you for telling us what your preferred means of participating would be.

Next, we would like you to think about how much **time** you would be willing and able to give **each month** to answering questions about life events. Your time would be required to answer an initial question and then specific event related follow up questions.

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Activity Transcript - Event Triggered

Read the statements carefully below and fill in the blanks with your answers.

I would be prepared to spend up to minutes a **month** responding to an initial question about recent life events **and** answering follow up questions.

I would be prepared to spend up to minutes **every four months** responding to an initial question about recent life events **and** answering follow up questions.

I would be prepared to spend **more time** answering questions about my

because

. I would be prepared to spend

more minutes answering questions about this topic.

I would be prepared to spend **less time** answering questions about my

because

. I would be prepared to spend

minutes answering questions about this topic.

Task 4: Thanking you for your time

We have talked about how you would take part and how much time you would be prepared to spend.

We would now like to know how you would expect to be compensated for your time.

Move a card into the Order of Preference box below by clicking the card and selecting 'Order of Preference'. You can also drag cards directly into the box. Reorder cards into your order of preference by dragging them up and down or selecting "Move Up" / "Move Down" from the card's menu.

CARDS:



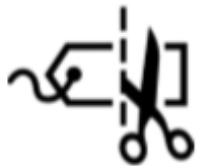
Money



Entered into a prize draw



Store voucher



Store discounts



Charitable donation



Nothing



Reporting back on your contribution

GROUPS:

Order of preference

No min or max

"Liked most" to "Liked least"

Task 5: Thank you for your time - Part B

We want to understand whether people would answer additional questions about life events regardless of the incentive value.

Is there an amount of time committed at which you would like an incentive for answering questions?

Please click on the image to below to mark at which point you would like an incentive for the amount of time committed a month. Please then elaborate on your answer.

10 minutes a month	15 minutes a month	20 minutes a month	30 minutes a month	More than 30 minutes a month
--------------------	--------------------	--------------------	--------------------	------------------------------

Task 6: Thanking you for your time - Part C

In order to encourage participation, what is the **minimum** amount of compensation you would want, depending on the time commitment required?

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Activity Transcript - Event Triggered

Please answer by filling in the blanks below.

For 10 minutes a month of participation I would require a minimum incentive of

1. What is the minimum incentive you would require for 10 minutes a month participation?

For 15 minutes a month of participation I would require a minimum incentive of

2. What is the minimum incentive you would require for 15 minutes a month participation?

For 20 minutes a month of participation I would require a minimum incentive of

3. What is the minimum incentive you would require for 20 minutes a month participation?

For 30 minutes a month of participation I would require a minimum incentive of

4. What is the minimum incentive you would require for 30 minutes a month participation?

For more than 30 minutes a month of participation I would require a minimum incentive of

5. What is the minimum incentive you would require for more than 30 minutes a month participation?

Activity:

Day Five: Time to reflect

Task 1: The final day

Welcome to the last day of the online community! This will be an opportunity to reflect on what you have learnt and seen over the past four days.

We hope that you have enjoyed the online community. Please do continue to add to the discussion topics and remember that if you have any final thoughts to share you can using the private message function.

Please also remember to respond to any moderator comments or questions made to your activity responses this week.

Please press continue at the bottom of the page to continue to today's tasks.

OPTIONS:

- Continue

Task 2: Sharing life events

As you may remember, on day one of this online community, we asked you about the kinds of life events you would and would not feel comfortable sharing with Understanding Society.

We want to know if your opinion on this has changed at all. Cards can be grouped by dragging them into the box with a plus sign below the two groups or by clicking on the card and selecting a group from the two options. Please sort the cards into the following two groups:

- Those you would be **likely to share** with Understanding Society researchers.
- Those you would be **unlikely to share** with Understanding Society researchers.

Cards can be reordered by dragging them up and down or selecting "Move Up" / "Move Down" from the card's menu.



New job / Promotion



Change in employment status



Retiring



Pregnancy



Moving house



A change in relationship status



Being diagnosed with a health condition



Having a health condition which impacts on daily life

Likely to share with researchers	Unlikely to share with researchers
No min or max	No min or max
No Ranking Labels	No Ranking Labels

Task 3: Reporting 'non-events'

Understanding Society also want to know when a life event has not happened, i.e. when there has been no status change in your life. Having data on when things have not changed is just as important as knowing when life events have happened.

<https://understandingsociety.recollective.com/event-triggered/transcripts>

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Activity Transcript - Event Triggered

What would you need to be told to encourage you to report even if no life events have happened? Please answer using the text box below.

Task 4: Create your own campaign

For the final task of the online community we would like you be creative!

Imagine that **you** are responsible for encouraging Understanding Society members to sign up to answer questions about life events throughout the year...

We would like you to do the following:

1. Write a slogan for the activity - try to make it as enticing and 'punchy' as you can and tell us how you would get the message to survey members. Would you call them? Text or e-mail them?
2. Write a short accompanying follow up message to the slogan. This should have a bit more information and detail about what is involved and why someone should take part. It should also include reassurances which you think will help to encourage their participation and put any doubts to rest.

Some things to think about:

1. Imagine your friends and family are the target audience - what would stand out to them / be interesting to them?
2. Feel free to use photos/videos/text - whatever you like!
3. Remember that reporting is the most important thing - both when life events have and have not happened, try to bear this in mind
4. Please be as creative as you can!

Task 5: The End!

Congratulations- you have completed the online community!

Thank you for taking part, your responses are very important to us and we really appreciate you taking the time to complete each activity.

If you have completed all the activities for day 1 to 5 and responded to moderator comments on your responses, as a thank you for your time we will be sending you £60. This will be sent via e-mail to the e-mail address you provided at recruitment and will be processed within 7 working days.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact the team through the forum's private messaging at the top of the page.

OPTIONS:

- Finish

9.4 Communication messages

Life doesn't happen to a timetable, does it?

We interview you once a year, but life can change at any time. We'd like to ask you about things like health, having children, relationships, and jobs between surveys, to get more accurate information about the life you have right now.

- Every person we interview has different experiences and it's really important that we capture when important events in your life are taking place. It gives us a more rounded picture of who you are as an individual and what is happening in your household.
- Sometimes life can change very quickly or unexpectedly. Knowing how you feel about life changes and what you do is important. You'll be helping us understand how different people navigate through life.
- Your life is just as interesting and useful to us if nothing's changed, so it's good to tell us that, too.

It's good for research

Understanding Society is the biggest study of its kind – looking at thousands of households over many years to give us a detailed picture of life in the UK. It helps the government decide on policy, shaping the future for all of us.

- Your information is very important to us, because your household represents hundreds of others across the UK.
- The more information you give us, the more accurate it is – it gives us better quality data.
- The better the data we have, the better it is for the research and analysis – which makes for better policy. This helps the government base decisions on what real people feel, think and do.

Making your survey easier

We're always looking for ways to improve the survey and how we collect information from you. The survey is very complex, but we want it to be an easy experience for people to complete it. Asking you short questions between interviews may help us to reduce the length of the main interview and only ask questions that are relevant to your life right now.

- Technology is developing all the time. We think using text messages and mobile tech may be a good way to complete the survey. Your answers today will help us to improve the way we carry out the main survey in future.
- We can test new ways of collecting data – for example, your help could mean we can tailor questions so they're more relevant to you.
- And if we can ask you a few questions regularly during the year, we might be able to make the annual survey shorter.