

2010 British Election Study

Technical Report

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1. Introduction

The British Election Study (BES) is one of the longest running social surveys in Britain. Begun in 1963 it has now accumulated data over a period of more than 45 years, covering the last 13 general elections. The purpose is to understand why people vote, and how and why they vote the way they do. It is a well-established and important research tool used by both the academic and non-academic communities, and has made a major contribution to the understanding of political attitudes and behaviour.

The 2010 BES incorporated three main components:

- i. random probability face to face survey
- ii. campaign internet panel survey
- iii. continuous monitoring internet survey

This report covers the design and conduct of the random probability face to face survey. The overall design of the face to face survey was itself made up of a number of separate elements:

- Pre-election survey
- Post-election survey
- Self completion mail-back questionnaire
- Vote validation exercise

The **pre-election survey** was conducted in home using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). The interview lasted on average just over 40 minutes with most fieldwork being conducted before the campaign was officially launched. Interviewing for the **post-election survey** began the day after the general election and was again conducted in home using CAPI. The sample for the post-election survey was a combination of respondents who had taken part in the pre-election survey and fresh 'top-up' respondents who had not. The addition of these 'top-up' respondents allowed for a larger sample size to be collected in the post-election survey and for the potential impact of any 'panel conditioning' resulting from having taken part in the pre-election survey to be assessed. The average interview length for the post-election survey was slightly longer than the pre-election survey at just under 60 minutes. At the end of the post-election survey respondents were left with a **self completion mail-back questionnaire**. These questionnaires were 11-12 pages in length with slightly different versions used in England, Scotland and Wales. The final element of the face to face component was a **vote validation exercise** where interviewers checked the marked up electoral register in local authority offices for all respondents who had agreed for their survey data to be linked.

A separate ethnic minority survey of around 2,700 respondents was also conducted at the same time as the post-election survey as part of the 2010 British Election Study. The EMBES was conducted using a completely separate sample but shared a large number of questionnaire items with the main BES. Full details about the EMBES can be found here (XXXX).

This report is arranged as follows

- Chapter 2 describes the **sample design**
- Chapter 3 covers **fieldwork** procedures and response rates
- Chapter 4 outlines the **data** and the topics covered in each of the surveys
- Chapter 5 provides information on the different **weighting** strategies and which weight to use for different types of analysis
- Chapter 6 describes the **vote validation exercise**
- Appendix A lists the 200 constituencies that were sampled for the study
- Appendix B

2. Sample

In keeping with previous years, the eligible population for the 2010 British Election Study was all those resident in private households in Great Britain south of the Caledonian Canal aged 18 years or older. Northern Ireland was not included in the study.

The sample for the survey employed the following multi-stage design.

1. Stratified random sample of 200 Parliamentary Constituencies
2. Random sample of 2 electoral wards selected with probability proportionate to size within each sampled constituency
3. A systematic random sample of addresses within each ward
4. If applicable Selection of dwelling unit at sampled address
5. One individual randomly sampled from among those eligible for the survey in the dwelling unit

2.1 Selection of constituencies and wards

Parliamentary constituency was the Primary Sampling Unit for the 2010 British Election Study and in total 200 were selected comprising 149 constituencies in England, 29 constituencies in Scotland and 22 constituencies in Wales. The stratification criteria for each region is set out below.

England

- Marginality – Constituencies were divided in to 2 strata marginal and non-marginal. Marginal constituencies were defined as those where the winning party was 10% or less ahead of the second party in the 2005 general election.
- Government Office Region
- Population density – This was taken as the number of delivery points

Scotland

- Marginality – Constituencies were divided in to 2 strata marginal and non-marginal. Marginal constituencies were defined as those where the winning party was 10% or less ahead of the second party in the 2005 general election.
- Parliamentary Electoral Region (Central Scotland, Glasgow, Highlands and Islands, Lothians, Mid Scotland and Fife, North East Scotland, South of Scotland, West of Scotland).
- Population density – This was taken as the number of delivery points after expansion by the Multiple Occupancy Indicator (MOI)

Wales

- Marginality – Constituencies were divided in to 2 strata marginal and non-marginal. Marginal constituencies were defined as those where the winning party was 10% or less ahead of the second party in the 2005 general election.
- Percentage Welsh language speakers - This was based on the 2001 census with three equal bands created within each marginality band by creating cut off points at one third and two thirds
- Population density – This was taken as the number of delivery points

Fieldwork was carried out in home by interviewers from TNS-BMRB. Interviewing was conducted from the 23rd January 2010 until the 18th April 2010. The survey consisted of a face-to-face computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI).

2.2 Selection of wards

Within each constituency 2 wards were selected with a probability proportionate to size. For England and Wales the size measure was the number of delivery points while for Scotland it was the number of delivery points after expansion by the Multiple Occupancy Indicator (MOI).

2.3 Selection of addresses

Within each ward The Residential Postal Address File (PAF) was used to provide a sample frame of addresses. Addresses were selected from the complete list using a fixed sampling interval and random start. Both the pre-election sample and post-election top up sample were drawn at the same time. The pre-election sample were the addresses to be issued at the initial wave while the top-up sample were addresses that were to be issued only for the post election wave of fieldwork. It was only after the sample had been drawn that addresses were allocated to either the pre-election or post-election top-up sample groups.

2.4 Selection of dwelling unit

In the vast majority of cases only one household was found at each sampled address. However, in some cases, more than one dwelling unit was identified and at that point the interviewer was required to sample one of the dwelling units. The interviewer did this by listing all of the dwelling units they had identified at the address and selecting one using a pre-printed Kish grid to ensure that selection was random.

2.5 Selection of individuals

Within each selected dwelling unit the interviewer then enumerated all resident individuals aged 18+. One person was then selected from this list of potential respondents using a pre-printed Kish grid to ensure that selection was random.

3. Fieldwork

3.1 Pre-election wave fieldwork

Fieldwork was carried out in home by interviewers from TNS-BMRB. Interviewing began on the 23rd January 2010 until the 18th April 2010. The survey consisted of a face-to-face computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI).

Before fieldwork started an advance letter was sent to all selected addresses, addressed to the 'resident'. It briefly described the purpose of the survey and the coverage of the questionnaire and asked for cooperation when the interviewer called. It contained a book of six first class stamps as an unconditional incentive and promised a conditional incentive of a £5 gift voucher for taking part in the interview. For addresses selected in London and the South East, the promised incentive was a £10 gift voucher, in order to boost response in these areas. Interviewers had extra copies of the advance letter for use on the doorstep to help in convincing people to take part. The advance letters can be found in accompanying documents to this technical report.

Fieldwork was conducted by 188 interviewers from TNS-BMRB. Interviewers received a short video briefing, recorded by members of the research team which they were required to watch before starting work. The video briefing covered the background and aims of the survey, methods for maximising response, selection procedures, and the questionnaire. In addition to the video briefing, all interviewers dialled in to telephone conference calls in small groups led by members of the research team. These conference calls were used to provide interviewers with a more interactive platform in which they could discuss particular refusal avoidance strategies in relation to this study and have the opportunity to ask questions or voice concerns after having seen the questionnaire.

Some addresses or names of potential respondents who had been difficult to find at home, or had refused or broken appointments were re-issued to interviewers (in most cases interviewers who had not made the initial call) during the later phases of fieldwork.

The mean interview length was 41 minutes¹. The median interview length was 39 minutes.

3.2 Response – pre-election wave

Table 3.1 gives a breakdown of the final sample outcomes for the pre-wave fieldwork stage.

¹ Calculated omitting outliers of more than 90 minutes

Table 3.1 Response rates: pre-wave fieldwork

	N	%
Total Addresses issued	3900	100
Out of scope (deadwood)	416	11
Total eligible	3484	100
No interview:	1549	44
Refused	1015	29
Non contacts	243	7
Other unproductive	291	8
Full interviews	1935	56

All PAF (postal address file) samples include a proportion of addresses that are ineligible, often referred to as deadwood, these are excluded from response rate calculations and fall into the out of scope category.

3.3 Post-election wave fieldwork

The post-election wave followed as many respondents who had taken part in the pre-wave as possible along with a top-up sample of fresh respondents in order to maintain the sample size and reduce bias due to attrition. The post-election survey itself consisted of a face-to-face computer assisted interview, and a mail-back paper questionnaire.

3.3.1 Face-to-Face interview

The fieldwork was carried out in-home by TNS-BMRB interviewers. Interviewing began the day after the general election on 7th May 2010 and continued until the 5th September 2010.

All re-contact sample members (those who had been interviewed at the pre-election wave and agreed to be contacted again at the end of the interview) were sent a personally addressed advance letter, reminding them that they took part in the pre-election survey and explaining why they were being asked to take part again. The letter promised a conditional incentive of a £5 gift voucher for taking part. As in the pre-election survey the incentive for addresses in London and the South-East was a £10 gift voucher.

All top-up sample addresses were sent an advance letter addressed to the 'resident', explaining the purpose of the survey, the coverage of the questionnaire and asking the cooperation when the interviewer called. Enclosed with the advance letter was a book of six first class stamps as an unconditional incentive. In addition the letter promised a conditional incentive of a £5 gift voucher for taking part in the interview (£10 in London and the South East). The advance letters can be found in accompanying documents to this technical report.

Fieldwork was conducted by 238 interviewers from TNS-BMRB, the majority of whom had also worked on the pre-election wave. All interviewers received full written instructions about this stage of the research along with a video briefing recorded by members of the TNS-BMRB research team.

Some addresses or names of potential respondents who had been difficult to find at home, or had refused or broken appointments were re-issued to interviewers (in most cases interviewers who had not made the initial call) during the later phases of fieldwork.

The interview was slightly different for re-contact and top-up sample respondents, since some data that had already been collected for re-contact respondents in the pre-election wave was not asked of them again at the post-election wave. Therefore the length of the interview was slightly shorter for re-contact respondents than for top-up respondents. The average interview length for re-contact respondents was 55 minutes² and the median interview length was 50 minutes. The average interview length for top-up respondents was 63 minutes³ and the median interview length was 58 minutes.

3.3.2 Mail-back questionnaire

At the end of the interview a mail-back questionnaire was left with all respondents⁴ together with a reply-paid envelope. There were three different versions of the questionnaire for respondents in England, Scotland and Wales. The English questionnaire was 11-pages and consisted of 36 questions. The Scottish and Welsh questionnaires were 12 pages and consisted of 42 questions. If necessary up to three postal reminders were sent to obtain the mail-back supplement. The second reminder was accompanied by a further copy of the questionnaire. Copies of the reminder letters can be found in accompanying documents to this technical report.

A prize draw was used to encourage response, with a first prize of £500, three prizes of £100, ten prizes of £10 and twenty prizes of £5. The winners were drawn from mail-back questionnaires returned by the 31st August 2010. In the later stages of fieldwork, in order to boost response, interviewers were also entered into the prize draw so that if one of their respondents won a prize, they would win the equivalent amount. This was to encourage interviewers to either stay with the respondent while they completed the mail-back so they could send it back themselves or call round at a later date to pick it up.

3.4 Response- post-election wave

² Calculated omitting outliers of over 150 minutes

³ Calculated omitting outliers of over 150 minutes

⁴ With the exception of those who refused to complete it or who were unable to due to language or physical difficulties

Table 3.2 and 3.3 give a breakdown of the final sample outcomes in the post-election fieldwork stage for the recontact and top-up samples. A total of 3,075 respondents were interviewed for the post-election wave. Of these, 1,843 respondents (60 per cent of those interviewed) returned their self-completion questionnaire. The overall response rate for the post-election wave was 61 per cent.

Table 3.2 Response rates: Re-contact sample

	N	% of those interviewed at pre	% of those eligible for post
Total interviewed during pre-election survey	1935	100	
Not issued for post-election survey	119	6	
Eligible for post-election survey	1816	94	
Out of scope	11	1	
Eligible	1805		100
No interview:	307	16	17
Refused	102	5	6
Non contact	52	3	3
Mover not traced	51	3	3
Other unproductive	102	5	6
Full interviews	1498	77	83
Self completion mailback returned	1014	52	56 (68 % of those completing f2f survey)

Table 3.3 Response rates: Top-up sample

	N	%
Total Addresses issued	3669	100
Out of scope	450	12
Total eligible	3219	100
No interview:	1642	51
Refused	874	27
Non contacts	323	10
Other unproductive	445	14
Full interviews	1577	49
Self completion mailback returned	829	26 (53 % of those completing f2f survey)

As with the pre-election sample a proportion of the top-up sample addresses were out of scope ('deadwood'). These are excluded from the base before response rates are calculated. For the re-contact sample the only out of scope cases were those where the pre-election wave respondent had died or moved abroad.

4. The Data

4.1 Topics covered

The full questionnaires for the pre-election wave, the post-election wave and the three English, Welsh and Scottish versions of the mail-back questionnaire can be found in accompanying documents to this technical report.

The pre-election wave CAPI questionnaire covered the following topic areas and had the following broad structure:

- Issues in the election
- Party identification (version 1)
- Party supporter (version 2)
- Voting intentions
- Likelihood of parties winning in constituency/ general election
- Rating of party leaders
- Trust in British institutions
- Rating of the political parties
- Contact with local MP
- Social and political attitudes
- Party leader images
- Trust in party leaders
- Economic evaluations
- Financial crisis
- Europe
- Own/party positions on tax/spend
- Own/party positions on civil liberties
- Attitudes to Afghanistan
- Likely impact of voting in general election
- Recall vote
- Social trust
- Attitudes to voting and politics
- Attitudes to democracy/risk-taking
- General life satisfaction
- Political interest and influence
- Beliefs and values
- Party identification (version 2)
- Party supporter (version 1)
- Party contact
- MPs expenses
- Classification
- Interviewer observation of respondent

The post-election wave questionnaire covered the following topic areas and had the following broad structure:

- Political interest
- Issues in the election
- Party identification (version 1)
- Party supporter (version 2)
- General election and voting
- Rating of party leaders
- Trust in British institutions
- Rating of political parties
- Social and political attitudes
- Party leader images
- Trust in party leaders
- Economic evaluations
- Financial crisis
- Contact with authorities/NHS/MP
- Views on change in the country
- Europe
- Own/party positions on tax/spend
- Own/party positions on civil liberties
- Attitudes to the war in Afghanistan
- Recall vote (Top-up respondents only)
- Local elections
- Involvement in politics and community affairs
- Persuaded to vote
- Party membership
- Attitudes to voting and politics
- Party identification (version 2)
- Party supporter (version 1)
- Attitudes to democracy/ risk-taking
- General life satisfaction
- Attitudes to electoral system
- Self-rated class and social trust
- Attitudes to ethnic minorities in Britain
- Attitudes to radical Islamists
- Own/party positions on opportunities for Black and Asian people
- Attitudes towards minority groups
- MPs expenses (Top-up respondents only)
- Political knowledge
- Media use
- Party leader televised debates
- Party contact
- AV Ballot

- Classification
- Interviewer observation of respondent

The mail-back questionnaire covered the following topic areas and had the following broad structure:

- Interest in general election
- Who the parties look after
- Views on the parties
- Party identification
- Internet use during election campaign
- Crime and punishment
- Views on elections
- Women and ethnic minorities in politics
- Left-right scale
- Social attitudes
- Trade unions and big business
- Attitudes to political parties in general
- Electoral system
- Attitudes to democracy
- Likelihood of voting for each party
- Attitudes to immigrants in Britain
- Discuss politics
- Globalisation
- Self-rated situation in life
- Views on neighbourhood
- Impact of Scottish Parliament/ Welsh Assembly (Scotland/Wales only)
- Scottish/Welsh party identification (Scotland/Wales only)
- Views on Scottish/Welsh independence (Scotland/Wales only)
- Classification

Showcards used in the pre and post-election CAPI interviews can be found in accompanying documents to this technical report.

4.2 Data cleaning and editing

Data was checked for errors by researchers and data processors. A small amount of editing also took place primarily to cap very high or illogical answers to numerical questions. In addition where respondents had given a multiple response to a single-coded question on the mail-back questionnaire, these responses were edited to be “not stated”.

Where questions were open-ended or respondents mentioned something that was not on the answer list⁵, the coding team reviewed, cleaned and categorised answers. Coders looked at

⁵ Commonly known as “other – specify”

all questions where an “other – specify” answer had been given. The aim of this exercise, commonly known as back coding, was to see whether the answer given could actually be coded into one of the original pre-coded response options.

Code frames were also created for open ended questions. Standard coding procedures were applied to both “other – specify” and open ended questions. After coding, the data was analysed to examine the proportion that were remaining in the ‘other’ category.

4.3 Variable names

The SPSS dataset contains variables for all questions in the pre and post-election face to face surveys and the mail-back survey.

In the dataset the default for the variable name is the question number from the questionnaire. The variable names have been labelled with AQ before the question number if the variable is from the pre-election CAPI survey, with BQ if the variable is from the post-election CAPI survey and CQ if the variable is from the mail-back survey.

When a question allows for multiple responses it is split into multiple binary variables in the dataset and follows the naming conventions with a letter attached to the end. For instance ‘AQ5a, AQ5c...AQ5z’.

Where variables on the mailback questionnaire differ depending on whether the respondent was from Scotland or Wales, the letters ‘s’ or ‘w’ have been attached to the end of the variable name to distinguish them.

4.4 Special codes

Throughout the dataset “Don’t know” responses have been coded as -1 and “Refused” responses have been coded as -2 for all single coded variables. For variables from the mail-back questionnaire all “Not stated” cases have been coded as -3. These are cases where either the respondent left this question blank on the questionnaire or gave a multiple response to a single coded question.

5. Weighting

Weighting is used to ensure survey respondents are representative of the population to which they are generalising. For the 2010 BES weighting was carried out in two stages. Firstly design weights were created to account for unequal selection probabilities, and secondly non response weighting was applied to account for differential response between different groups.

5.1 Design weights

Unequal selection probabilities are present in the sample design of the 2010 BES at three points. Firstly, constituencies in Scotland and Wales were over sampled to increase interview numbers in these areas and improve regional level analysis. Secondly, a small number of addresses in the PAF contain multiple dwelling units. At these addresses a second sampling stage needs to be conducted and as a result of this these dwelling units have a lower chance of being selected. Finally, as only one individual is selected from each household for interview people living in household with large number of eligible residents have a smaller chance of selection than those who are living in a household where there is only one eligible resident who are included with certainty.

Therefore the final selection probability is calculated by multiplying the following three selection probabilities:

- i. The address selection probability
- ii. $1/\text{number of dwelling units at the address}$
- iii. $1/\text{number of eligible individuals at the selected dwelling unit}$

The design weight is simply $1/\text{final selection probability}$. Caps were applied to the number of dwelling units and eligible household members to reduce excessive weights. The design weight has also been trimmed to ensure the factor of largest to smallest weight is not too extreme.

5.2 Non-response weighting

The approach taken for non-response weighting differed between that used for the pre-election and post-election top-up respondents and the approach taken for post election follow up respondents. The former were cross sectional respondents and as such could only be weighted back to robust demographic available at the national level. In contrast the latter group were a panel survey and as a result data from the pre-election wave of the research can be used to more accurately identify which groups were less likely to respond to the post-election wave of research and weights applied to correct for this.

5.2.1 Cross sectional non-response weights

Once the design weight had been applied rim weights were created for respondents in the pre-election wave and the top-up respondents in the post-election wave based on the following demographic dimensions:

- Sex
- Age
- Government Office Region

The population targets for these dimensions were taken from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) mid-year population estimates from 2008. To avoid extreme weights having a large influence on the estimates a second weight was also included trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles for the pre-election wave. This capped weight increases the effective sample size by around 40 cases with very little impact on distributions for age, sex and region.

5.2.2 Panel non-response weights

(i) Post-election wave panel respondents

While only limited demographic variables could be applied to the cross sectional interviews, there is a far richer amount of information available for panel respondents from their answers to the pre-election survey.

Various variables from the pre-election survey were compared for responders and non-responders to the post-election wave of research. These were then entered into a logistic regression model with response as the dependant variable. The final weight from the pre-election wave was the base design weight applied when running the model. The predictor variables were entered via a forward stepwise procedure with the final optimal model consisting of the following variables .

- Age-group of respondent
- Gender
- Region
- How likely the respondent said that they were to vote
- Which party they identified with
- Tenure
- Interviewer's perception of respondent interest in interview

The predicted response probabilities from the final optimal model were converted into a non-response weight by calculating their reciprocal. To avoid extreme weights having a large influence on the estimates a second non-response weight was also included trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles.

(ii) Mail-back questionnaires

The same process that was used to create the non-response weights for post-election panel respondents was then applied to the mail-back questionnaires but this time using the post-election survey results. Again predictor variables were entered via a forward stepwise procedure with the final optimal model consisting of the following variables .

- Age-group of respondent
- Gender
- Region
- How likely the respondent said they were to vote in the next local election
- How much attention respondent pays to politics
- Which party they identified with
- Employment type
- Whether respondent was new at post wave

Again, the predicted response probabilities from the final optimal model were converted into a non-response weight by calculating their reciprocal. To avoid extreme weights having a large influence on the estimates a second non-response weight was also included trimmed at the 2nd and 98th percentiles.

5.3 Weights in the dataset

The dataset contains seven weights. These are:

- Prewgtc –This weight is for analysing the pre-election data with extreme weights having been capped
- Prewgt – This is the uncapped version of the pre-election weight
- Panwgtc - This weight is for analysing panel respondents to both the pre and post election waves with extreme weights having been capped
- Prewgt – This is the uncapped version of the panel respondent weight
- Postwgt – This wave should be used for analysing all respondents to the post wave including both the panel respondents and the fresh top-up sample respondents
- Mailwgtc – This weight is for analysing the postal mail back survey with extreme weights having been capped
- Mailwgt – This is the uncapped version of the postal mail back weight

6. Vote Validation Exercise

As an extension to the British Election Study and the Ethnic Minority British Election Study, TNS-BMRB conducted a vote validation exercise on the respondents who took part in the main British Election Study and the Ethnic Minority British Election Study.

The aim of this exercise was to validate the answers respondents gave to the question on whether or not they voted in the general election during the CAPI interview against official electoral records.

On the day of the general election, an electoral register is marked at each polling station to record which people turned out to vote⁶. These registers are then kept within local authorities for a period of 12 months after the general election and they are available for inspection on request by members of the public.

6.1 The sample

The sample of names and addresses was taken from the names and addresses recorded at the end of the CAPI interview in main BES and the EMBES. A total of 6249 names and addresses were issued for the vote validation exercise⁷. The Local Authority was matched to the respondents' addresses based on postcode, and in total the sample covered 218 local authorities. On average there were 29 names and addresses to be validated at each local authority, although this varied significantly from 1 to 389.

6.2 Fieldwork

6.2.1 The pilot

A small scale pilot was carried out by members of the research team amongst 3 local authorities. The purpose of the pilot was firstly to establish how easy it would be to gain access to the marked registers and whether there were any particular procedures that interviewers would need to follow in order to gain cooperation of local authorities. Secondly, the pilot was used to become familiar with the markings and the organisation of the marked electoral registers in order to be able to give interviewers more detailed instructions.

6.2.2 Main fieldwork

⁶ This register only records details of whether the named person turned out on the day of the election, it does not record details of which party the person voted for, or whether or not their electoral paper was valid and their vote counted

⁷ A small number of cases who took part in the CAPI interviews were not issued for the vote validation exercise due to the contact details being incomplete

Fieldwork was carried out by TNS-BMRB interviewers who were issued with one or more local authorities and a list of names and addresses to validate. Interviewers were provided with telephone numbers and addresses for local authorities and they were required to make contact with the council to arrange a convenient time to visit their offices in person to inspect the marked electoral registers. Interviewers were provided with copies of letters to give to electoral officers at local authorities, explaining more about the research and what they would like to do. Some local authorities required a request in writing before granting permission to inspect the marked electoral register.

Once access had been negotiated, interviewers looked up each name and address on the marked electoral registers and recorded on a data collection sheet whether or not each respondent had voted in the general election.

All interviewers received a video briefing recorded by the TNS-BMRB research team, which they watched before starting work. The video briefing covered the procedures for making contact with local authorities and gaining their cooperation (along with learnings from the pilot), and the procedures for searching for names and addresses on the register, explanations of what different markings mean and how to record outcomes. Interviewers were also provided with further more detailed written instructions which they were able to refer to when they were at the local authority offices.

All 218 local authorities were visited by an interviewer. Once each assignment was complete, interviewers returned their completed data collection sheets to head office by recorded delivery.

6.3 The data

The information recorded on data collection sheets was entered by a data entry team. There were 6 possible outcomes recorded on the data file for the validated vote:

- Voted in person
- Postal/proxy vote
- Not eligible to vote – the named person appeared on the marked register and so had registered to vote, but was not eligible to vote in the general election e.g. the person was a European citizen
- Eligible but did not vote - the named person appeared on the marked register and therefore had registered to vote, and they were eligible to vote in the general election, but did not
- Name not registered at this address – either the address appeared on the marked register but the named person was not listed as registered to vote at the address given, or the given address did not appear on the register at all (i.e. no-one at the address is registered to vote)
- Name/address details not sufficient to identify on register - if the details given by the respondent at the end of the CAPI interview were not full enough to identify them on the marked register

For a small number of cases (11 for the main BES and 16 for EMBES) the data collection sheet was returned without an outcome recorded. These cases have been labelled as 'missing' in the dataset.

6.3.1 Data imputation

At the end of the CAPI surveys consent to link data from the survey with publicly available information from the electoral register was asked of all respondents. Data from the vote validation exercise was not used for those who refused consent, instead outcomes for these respondents were randomly assigned using imputation.

Appendix A – Sampled Constituencies

Aberavon Co Const
Aberdeen South Burgh Const
Aldridge-Brownhills Boro Const
Alyn and Deeside Co Const
Ashfield Co Const
Banff and Buchan Co Const
Batley and Spen Boro Const
Battersea Boro Const
Beaconsfield Co Const
Bermondsey and Old Southwark Boro Const
Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk Co Const
Beverley and Holderness Co Const
Bexhill and Battle Co Const
Birmingham, Ladywood Boro Const
Birmingham, Northfield Boro Const
Birmingham, Yardley Boro Const
Blackley and Broughton Boro Const
Blackpool North and Cleveleys Boro Const
Blackpool South Boro Const
Blaenau Gwent Co Const
Bognor Regis and Littlehampton Co Const
Bolsover Co Const
Boston and Skegness Co Const
Bradford West Boro Const
Braintree Co Const
Brecon and Radnorshire Co Const
Brent North Boro Const
Bridgend Co Const
Brighton, Pavilion Boro Const
Bristol East Boro Const
Bristol West Boro Const
Broxbourne Boro Const
Bury St. Edmunds Co Const
Calder Valley Co Const
Camberwell and Peckham Boro Const
Cardiff Central Boro Const
Cardiff North Boro Const
Cardiff South and Penarth Boro Const
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr Co Const
Central Ayrshire Co Const
Ceredigion Co Const
Chichester Co Const

Chipping Barnet Boro Const
Cities of London and Westminster Boro Const
City of Chester Co Const
Clwyd West Co Const
Croydon Central Boro Const
Croydon North Boro Const
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East Co Cons
Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East Co Const
Cynon Valley Co Const
Dagenham and Rainham Boro Const
Dartford Co Const
Delyn Co Const
Denton and Reddish Boro Const
Derbyshire Dales Co Const
Devizes Co Const
Dewsbury Co Const
Dover Co Const
Dudley South Boro Const
Dumfries and Galloway Co Const
Dundee West Burgh Const
Dwyfor Meirionnydd Co Const
East Ham Boro Const
East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow Co Const
East Lothian Co Const
East Renfrewshire Co Const
East Surrey Co Const
Eddisbury Co Const
Edinburgh East Burgh Const
Edinburgh North and Leith Burgh Const
Edinburgh West Burgh Const
Elmet and Rothwell Co Const
Epsom and Ewell Boro Const
Esher and Walton Boro Const
Exeter Boro Const
Falkirk Co Const
Faversham and Mid Kent Co Const
Feltham and Heston Boro Const
Finchley and Golders Green Boro Const
Glasgow Central Burgh Const
Glasgow East Burgh Const
Glasgow North Burgh Const
Glasgow North East Burgh Const
Glenrothes Co Const
Haltemprice and Howden Co Const
Halton Co Const
Hastings and Rye Co Const

Hazel Grove Co Const
Hendon Boro Const
Hexham Co Const
Hitchin and Harpenden Co Const
Holborn and St. Pancras Boro Const
Houghton and Sunderland South Boro Const
Ilford South Boro Const
Ipswich Boro Const
Kensington Boro Const
Kilmarnock and Loudoun Co Const
Kingston upon Hull East Boro Const
Kingswood Boro Const
Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath Co Const
Knowsley Boro Const
Leeds Central Boro Const
Leicester East Boro Const
Lincoln Boro Const
Linlithgow and East Falkirk Co Const
Luton South Boro Const
Manchester Central Boro Const
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney Co Const
Mid Worcestershire Co Const
Midlothian Co Const
Milton Keynes South Boro Const
Mitcham and Morden Boro Const
Mole Valley Co Const
Morley and Outwood Co Const
Motherwell and Wishaw Burgh Const
Neath Co Const
Newbury Co Const
Newcastle upon Tyne East Boro Const
Newcastle-under-Lyme Boro Const
North East Fife Co Const
North East Somerset Co Const
North Shropshire Co Const
North Somerset Co Const
North Thanet Co Const
North Tyneside Boro Const
North Warwickshire Co Const
Northampton North Boro Const
Nottingham South Boro Const
Nuneaton Co Const
Ochil and South Perthshire Co Const
Orpington Boro Const
Oxford East Boro Const
Paisley and Renfrewshire South Co Const

Perth and North Perthshire Co Const
Pontypridd Co Const
Portsmouth North Boro Const
Putney Boro Const
Richmond Park Boro Const
Saffron Walden Co Const
Sedgefield Co Const
Sefton Central Co Const
Sheffield Central Boro Const
Sheffield South East Boro Const
Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough Boro Const
Sheffield, Hallam Co Const
Sherwood Co Const
Sittingbourne and Sheppey Co Const
Skipton and Ripon Co Const
South Basildon and East Thurrock Co Const
South Cambridgeshire Co Const
South Derbyshire Co Const
South East Cambridgeshire Co Const
South East Cornwall Co Const
South Norfolk Co Const
South Northamptonshire Co Const
South Ribble Co Const
South Swindon Co Const
South West Bedfordshire Co Const
South West Hertfordshire Co Const
Southampton, Itchen Boro Const
Southport Boro Const
St. Albans Co Const
St. Ives Co Const
Stockton North Boro Const
Stockton South Boro Const
Stoke-on-Trent South Boro Const
Sunderland Central Boro Const
Surrey Heath Co Const
Swansea East Boro Const
Tamworth Co Const
Tatton Co Const
Taunton Deane Co Const
Tewkesbury Co Const
The Wrekin Co Const
Torbay Boro Const
Torfaen Co Const
Torrige and West Devon Co Const
Totnes Co Const
Tunbridge Wells Co Const

Twickenham Boro Const
Vale of Clwyd Co Const
Vale of Glamorgan Co Const
Wallasey Boro Const
Warrington North Boro Const
Watford Boro Const
Weaver Vale Co Const
Wellingborough Co Const
Wentworth and Dearne Co Const
West Bromwich West Boro Const
West Dorset Co Const
West Dunbartonshire Co Const
West Lancashire Co Const
West Suffolk Co Const
West Worcestershire Co Const
Winchester Co Const
Witney Co Const
Wolverhampton North East Boro Const
Worsley and Eccles South Co Const
Wythenshawe and Sale East Boro Const
Ynys Mon Co Const

Appendix B – Advanced letters

< Address line 1>,
<Address line 2>,
<Address line 3>,
<Address line 4>,
<Postcode>.

Reference no.: <serial>
Survey no.:45107712

Dear resident,

I am writing to ask for your help with the **British Election Study**, which has been carried out at every general election for over forty years. It is a study of public opinion and voting in Britain, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is being conducted by the University of Essex together with the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB), an independent research company.

The interview covers a wide range of topics about life in Britain and no special knowledge is needed to answer any of the questions. We want to speak to people from all walks of life, of all ages and with all sorts of interests, whether they are planning to vote in the next general election or not. The results of the study will be published, they have considerable educational value and will be used, for example, by students in schools and colleges. By law your identity is protected and no individual respondent can be identified in any publications arising from the study.

Your address was chosen from the Post Office's list of addresses by a scientific sampling method to ensure we get a representative picture of people living in Britain. This means that no-one else from any other address can take part in the study in your place.

An interviewer will visit you over the next few weeks to explain more about the study. He or she will select one person in your household to take part and arrange a suitable day and time to speak to them. All interviewers will carry an identification card with their photograph on. All replies are treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Your views are very important to us and I will be very grateful for your help. Once you have started the interview you will be free to stop at any time. As a way of saying thank you, I enclose a book of stamps and the interviewer will give the person who is interviewed a [£5/£10] gift voucher.

You can find out more about the survey and what BMRB do at the following website: www.mybmrbsurvey.co.uk.

Yours faithfully

Professor David Sanders
University of Essex

< Address line 1>,
<Address line 2>,
<Address line 3>,
<Address line 4>,
<Postcode>.

Reference no.: <serial>
Survey no.:45107712

Dear <respondent name>,

You may remember that a few months ago you kindly helped us by taking part in the **British Election Study**. The British Election Study is a very important and interesting research project which has been carried out at every general election for over forty years. The project is totally independent of all political parties.

We now want to talk again to as many as possible of the people that we interviewed before the election. That is why we can't go to someone else instead this time, and we are hoping that you will be willing to help us again. It doesn't matter whether you voted or not in the general election – we want to speak to people from all walks of life, of all ages and with all sorts of interests.

The interview will be of a similar format to last time. Your answers will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act. As before, the study is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and is being conducted by the University of Essex together with BMRB (British Market Research Bureau), an independent research company.

If you happen to be busy when the interviewer calls, he or she will be happy to arrange to call back at a more convenient time. All interviewers carry an identification card with their photograph on.

I do hope you will be able to help us again. Even if you are unsure, please let the interview start and see how you get along, as you will be free to stop at any time. As a way of saying 'thank you', the interviewer will give you a [£5/£10] gift voucher on completion of the interview.

You can find out more about the survey and what BMRB do at the following website: www.mybmrbsurvey.co.uk. If you would like any further information about the study please call Emily Pickering from the study team on 02076565764.

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Yours sincerely,

Professor David Sanders
University of Essex

< Address line 1>,
<Address line 2>,
<Address line 3>,
<Address line 4>,
<Postcode>.

Reference no.: <serial>
Survey no.:45107712

Dear Resident,

I am writing to ask for your help with the **British Election Study**, which has been carried out at every general election for over forty years. The British Election Study is a very important and interesting study of public opinion and voting in Britain, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The study is being conducted by the University of Essex together with the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB), an independent research company. The study is entirely independent of all political parties.

The interview covers a wide range of topics about life in Britain and no special knowledge is needed to answer any of the questions. We want to speak to people from all walks of life, of all ages and with all sorts of interests, whether they are planning to vote in the next general election or not. The results of the study will be published. They have considerable educational value and will be used, for example, by students in schools and colleges. By law your identity is totally protected and no individual respondent can be identified in any publications arising from the study.

Your address was chosen from the Post Office's list of addresses by a scientific sampling method to ensure we get a representative picture of people living in Britain. This means that no-one else from any other address can take part in the study in your place.

An interviewer will visit you over the next few weeks to explain more about the study. He or she will select one person in your household to take part and arrange a suitable day and time to speak to them. All interviewers will carry an identification card with their photograph on. All replies are treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Your views are very important to us and I will be very grateful for your help. Once you have started the interview you will be free to stop at any time. As a way of saying thank you, I enclose a book of stamps and the interviewer will give the person who is interviewed a [£5/£10] gift voucher.

You can find out more about the survey and what BMRB do at the following website: www.mybmrbsurvey.co.uk. If you would like any further information about the study please call Emily Pickering from the study team on 02076565764.

Yours faithfully,

Professor David Sanders
University of Essex

