



SURVEY FUTURES

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Do we still need nonresponse follow-ups to web surveys of the UK general population?

Evidence from Understanding Society: the UK Household Longitudinal Study

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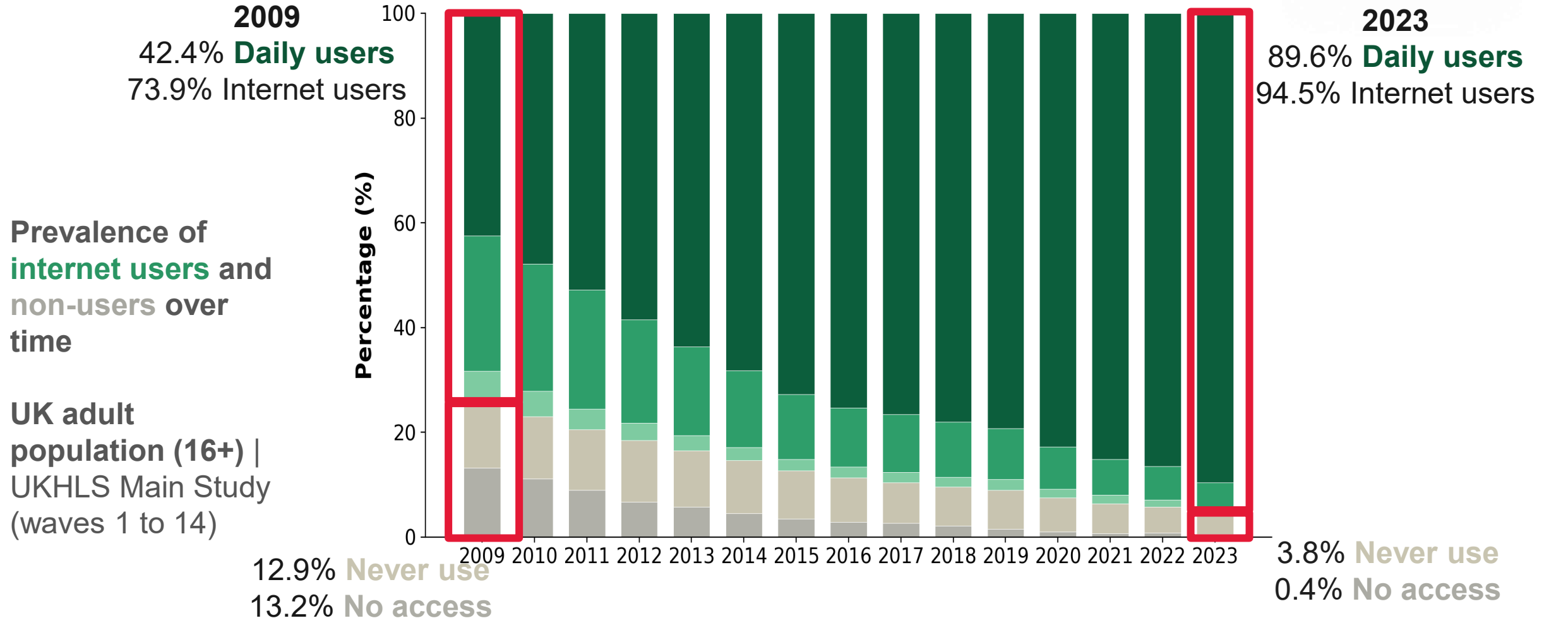


Web-first mixed-mode surveys, a quality-cost trade-off



- **Web surveys** appeared in the 2000s with the potential for lower survey costs and the limitation of limited coverage of the general population.
- New quality-cost trade-off in the 2010s: mixed-mode **web-first designs** with an **additional mode to reduce survey costs** whilst **minimising coverage and non-response bias** and increasing response rates.
- Web-first designs uncovered new **challenges: measurement mode effects** and **rising fixed survey costs**, since data collection requires setting up different modes.

Do we still need nonresponse follow-ups to web surveys of the UK general population?



Research questions

RQ1. How does the **representativeness of web respondents** compare to the representativeness of different groups of **internet users**?

- Representativeness of internet users and web respondents using **coefficients of variation (CVs)** of response propensities.

RQ2. Are **interviewer-administered follow-ups** of web non-respondents still needed to maximise sample representativeness?

- Representativeness of web respondents and web + CAPI/CATI respondents using **CVs**.

RQ3. How do interviewer-administered follow-ups of web non-respondents affect the representativeness of **hard-to-reach subgroups**?

- Representativeness of web respondents and web + CAPI/CATI respondents using **CVs**.

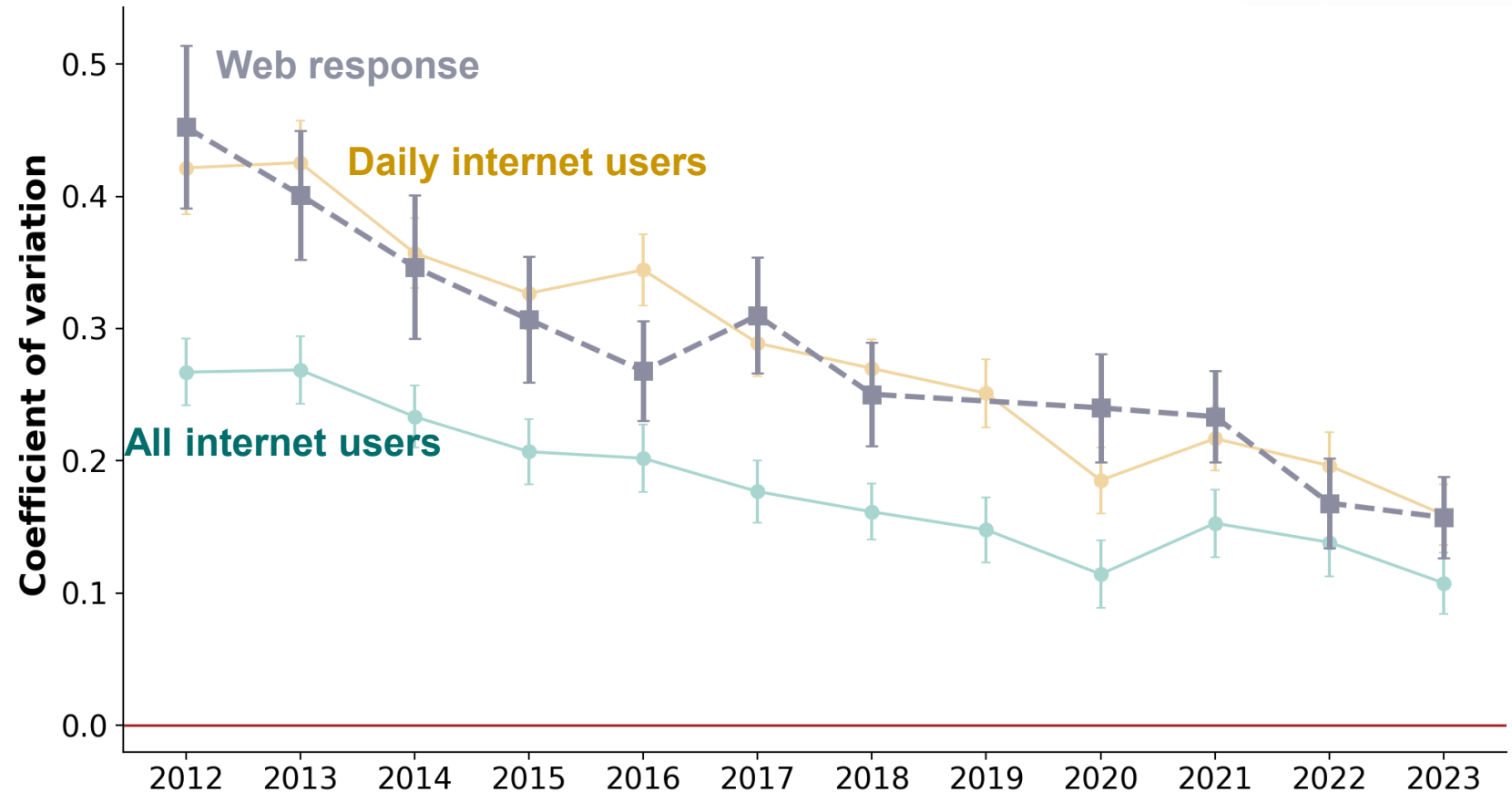
RQ4. Are there differences in answers to survey questions between **web and face-to-face modes**? Have these changed over time?

- Identify **measurement mode effects** in 480 variables after controlling for selection.

Internet use expansion improves the representativeness of web respondents

Overall CVs for **all internet users**, **daily internet users** and web respondents over time

GB adult population (16+) | UKHLS IP (waves 5 to 16)

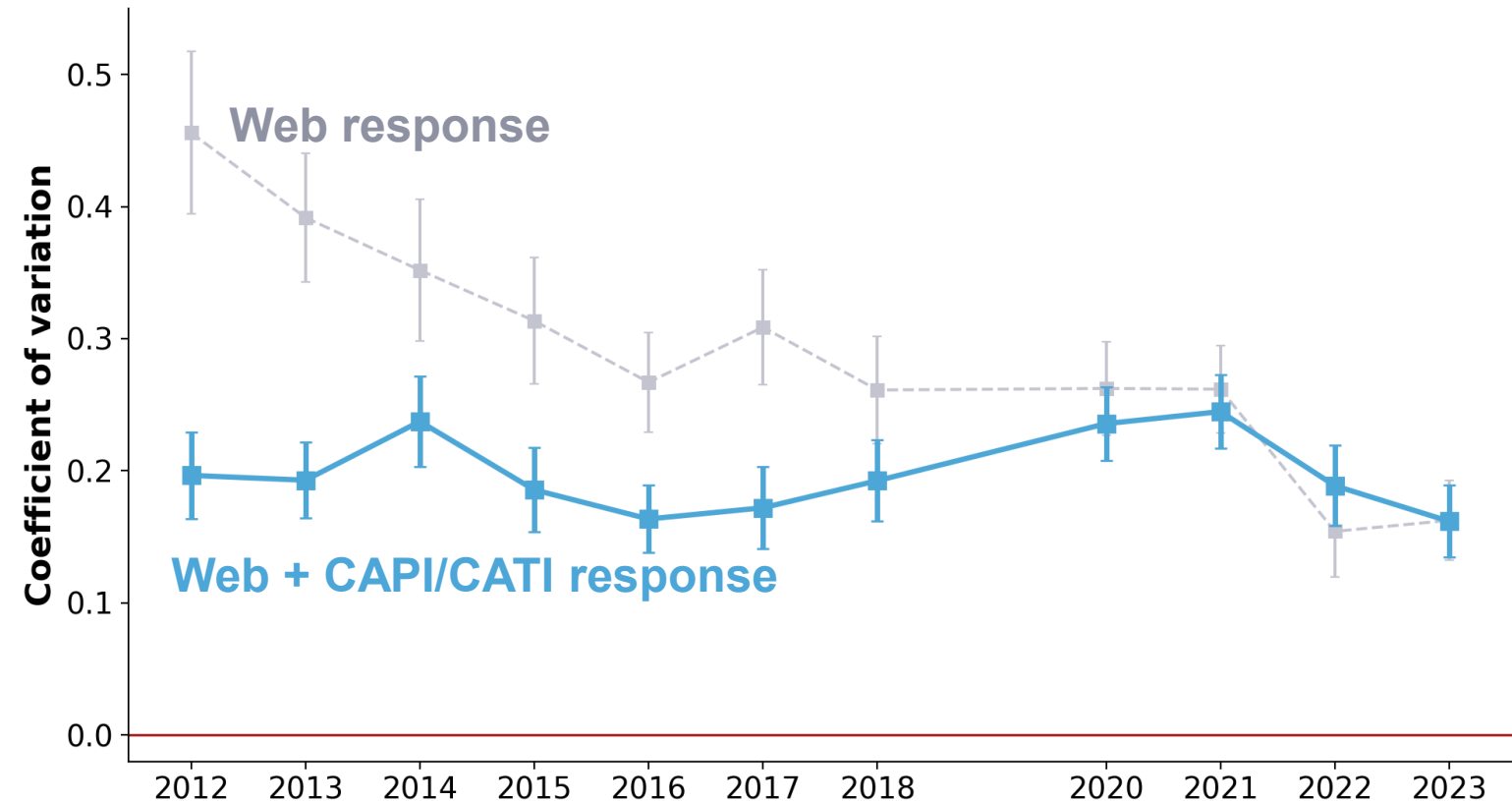


Learn more: [Are we stepping into the future? Exploring the representativeness of web-only surveys of the general population](#)

Internet expansion makes CAPI and CATI follow-ups less effective in improving the representativeness

Overall CVs for Web and
Web + CAPI respondents
over time

GB adult population (16+) |
UKHLS IP (waves 5 to 16)



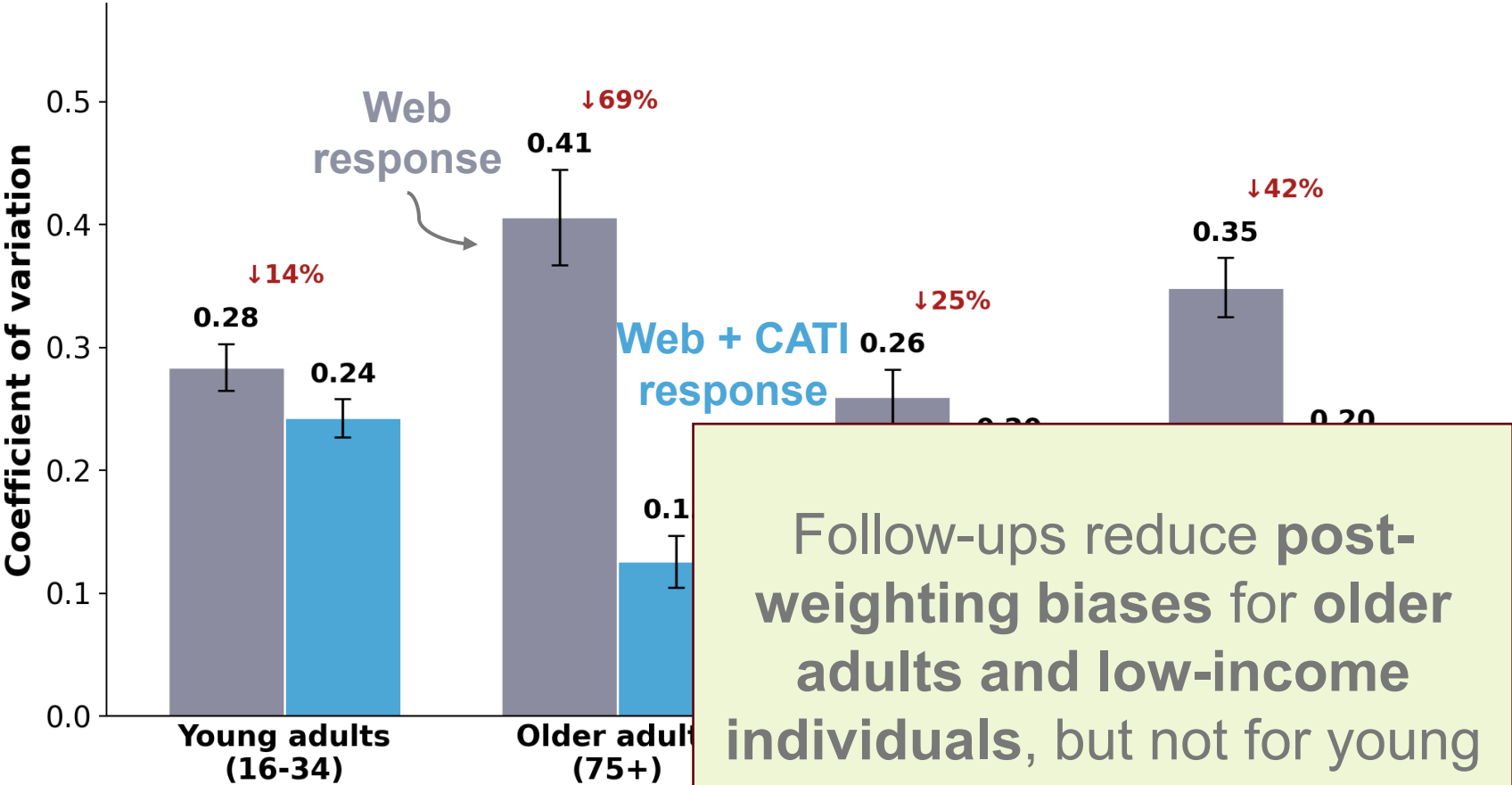
Learn more: [Are interviewer administered follow-ups of web non-respondents still needed to maximise respondent dataset quality?](#)

For hard-to-reach subgroups, CAPI and CATI follow-ups are needed to improve the representativeness



Overall CVs for Web and Web + CAPI respondents for four subgroups

UK adult population (16+) | UKHLS main survey (2020, waves 11 to 12)

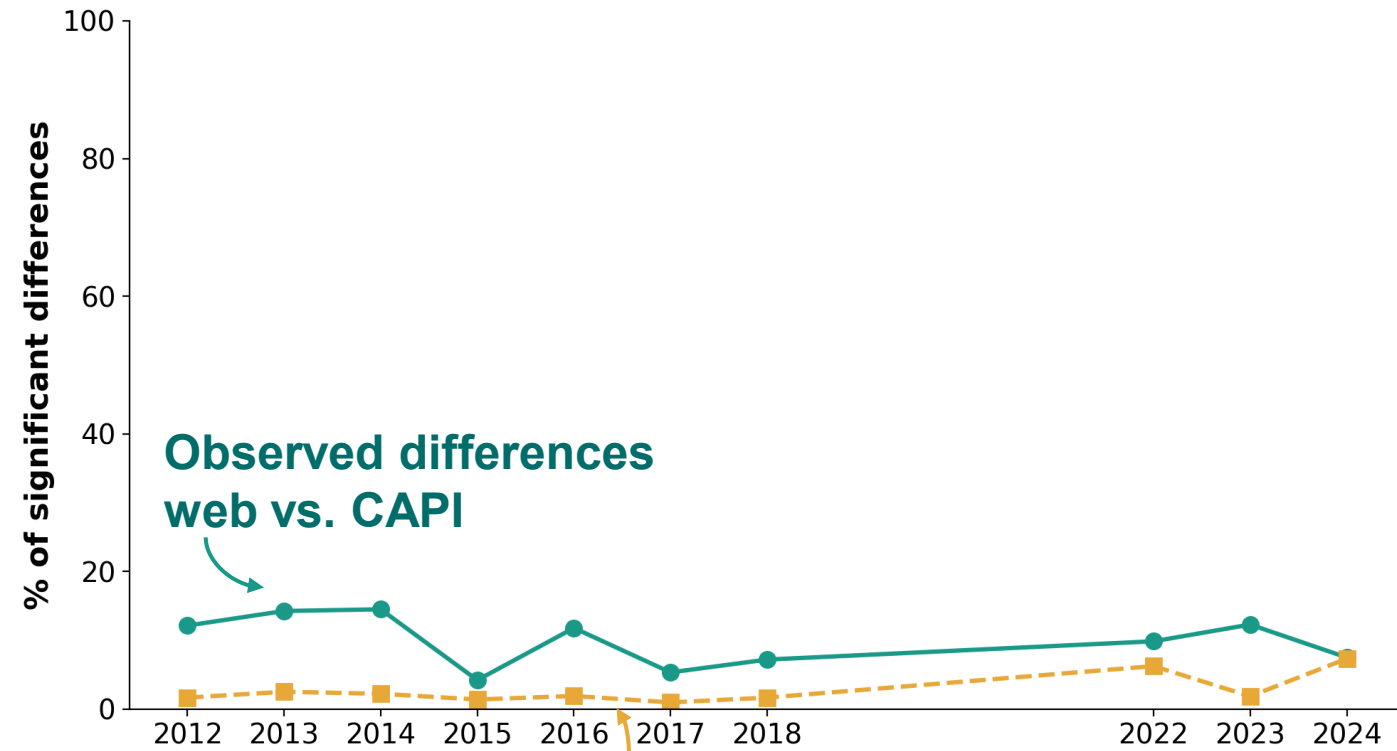


Follow-ups reduce **post-weighting biases for older adults and low-income individuals**, but not for young adults or ethnic minorities

Measurement mode effects are rare after controlling for selection

Prevalence (%) of significant differences between Web and CAPI

GB adult population (16+) | UKHLS IP (Waves 5 to 17, 480 questions)



Measurement differences after controlling for selection

Towards a new quality trade-off?

- The **digital divide is narrowing**, web respondents are becoming more representative, and the gains from follow-ups at the overall level have become negligible.
- Follow-ups remain important for improving the representativeness of some hard-to-reach subgroups, particularly **older adults and those on lower incomes**.
- **Web-first mixed-mode designs** remain a feasible approach that delivers good results in mitigating exclusion, with differences in measurement mode being less of a concern than previously thought.

Survey Futures
Workshop

Are nonresponse follow-ups to web surveys of the UK general population still needed? Implications for data quality


Date: 7th July 2026
Time: 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM
Venue: Online



Scan to register

Survey Futures
Working Paper 04
May 2025

Are follow-ups of web non-respondents worth the effort? The impact of multi-mode follow-ups on sample composition, non-response bias and costs



Survey Futures
Working Paper 07
Nov. 2025

Are we stepping into the future? Exploring the representativeness of web-only surveys of the general population



Survey Futures
Working Paper

Do the impacts of interviewer administered follow-ups of web non-respondents on dataset quality differ between overall and subgroup datasets?

COMING SOON

Survey Futures
Working Paper

Are the gains in reducing biases outweighed by measurement differences between modes?

COMING SOON



Thank you!



RESEARCH TEAM

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