

COVIDx Quick Win Requirement 4a – Response Rates and Bias

Background:

CIS was launched under tight time pressures at the end of April 2020 and at the time, with a rapidly developed initial respondent engagement approach, received strong public support and response rates of 50% on the survey. Since then, lockdown has eased and public attention has begun to shift onto returning to work and 'the new normal'. Within this context, both household response rates and the average number of respondents in a household have fallen (see Annex A), increasing the risk of non-response bias and particularly the risk that working respondents more likely to be infected by COVID19 fail to be recruited and retained on the survey.

Aim:

- Identify opportunities that can be applied to the current CIS infrastructure and operation to increase response rate and reduce the non-response bias on the COVID19 Infection Survey
- Particularly interested in immediate quick wins

Scope:

- Respondent communications and respondent engagement strategy (e.g. nudge letters, texts)
- CIS field practices on the doorstep and in the contact centre. Engaging with IQVIA senior management who have responsibility for field operations and the call centre
- Alternative sample recruitment approaches (e.g. crowd sourcing)
- Engage with the ONS Comms team and provide ideas and a contribution into the development of a sustained respondent engagement and response campaign.
- High level identification and scoping of more fundamental changes or alternative data collection approaches that could be made to the survey to address the issues described here – which would be developed and trialled in a subsequent CISx Phase.

Constraints:

- Any changes to respondent materials will require ethical approval
- At the present time the survey will continue to be primarily a door-step face-to-face approach, but in-scope are any changes or additions to this approach to reduce bias.
- The successful operational delivery of the survey is paramount; therefore nothing can adversely impact upon this.
- Need to think about financial constraints and impact
- At pace but with time to deliver a solution
- What resource they require to deliver the solution
- CIS only at this point
- Consider Ethical protocols
- Boundaries – are there any absolute no-go's

Available Information:

- CIS Protocol, current respondent materials and respondent engagement strategy
- Recent research on the non-response bias in the survey
- CIS MI on response rates and household attendance
- Incentivisation take up?

Timescales/Deliverables:

- Briefing and initial kick-off meeting w/c 20th July – appreciate the urgency, do you want this to be a costed proposal from IQVIA? If so, a fixed price or time and materials (within a constrained budget)? Yes
- Contribution at initial quick win workshop w/c 27th July
- Presentation, accompanying material [do you need to be more specific i.e. if this is to substantiate changes, do you want something more than suppositions?] (including revised respondent communications, field practices etc) w/c 10th August Yes
- High level identification and scoping of more fundamental changes w/c 17th August
- Opportunities for alternative field methods
- May need bolstering in terms of formal report(s)/presentation(s) aligned to governance for CIS.

Capability/Workload Assumptions:

- A team of individuals with social research and survey experience.
- Up to 5 people for 30 days, 150 days in total.