

## COVID-19 Briefing: Response by the longitudinal research community

**This briefing note provides a summary of the initial response by the longitudinal research community to the COVID-19 pandemic, at a national and regional level. Launching next week, the new, online COVID-19 Longitudinal Research Hub will be updated on a regular basis with surveys and emerging findings as they develop.**

### About CLOSER

CLOSER, the home of longitudinal research, is an interdisciplinary partnership of world-leading longitudinal studies, with participants born throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Our mission is to maximise the use, value and impact of longitudinal studies and research, at home and internationally. CLOSER works alongside the UK Data Service and The British Library, and is funded by the UKRI Economic and Social Research Council.

### What are longitudinal studies?

Longitudinal studies follow the same people and households over time, often from birth. These long-term studies have collected very detailed information about individuals and families, sometimes for decades and across generations of the same household. This includes information on health and disease, biological and behavioural information as well as the social and economic environments of participants.

### Why are longitudinal studies important?

Data and evidence from these studies have informed and shaped science and policy for decades – they will be vital in helping to understand and respond to COVID-19, enabling greater insights on inequalities, mental health, the national picture and regional differences.

### How are longitudinal studies responding to COVID-19?

The UK's longitudinal studies are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in a number of ways to help understand the immediate and long-term impacts on people, families, households and society. This work is harnessing the power of existing longitudinal birth cohort studies and will provide valuable insights for research and policy throughout and after the pandemic.

### What information is being collected?

New questionnaires have been launched for national and regional longitudinal study participants, some of which are already collecting data. These surveys will help to understand the health, social, and economic impacts of the pandemic at both a national and regional level, how people at different life stages are being affected, and how prior life experiences shape resilience or vulnerability to its effects. By following study members' lives into the future, it will be possible to track the longer-term consequences of the pandemic.

### What else is the longitudinal research community doing?

Coordinated by The Wellcome Trust, members of the longitudinal research community have developed a common set of questions to help understand the health, social, economic and behavioural impacts of COVID-19. This work is being shared throughout the research community to enable comparisons across different studies.

A new network, COVID MINDS, is focusing on the global mental health impact of the pandemic by linking together longitudinal studies from countries around the world. This network is funded by the Wellcome Trust.

### Suggested citation:

CLOSER Briefing: response by the longitudinal research community. (2020) CLOSER. London, UK.

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## Snapshot of initial response

These **five** studies are part of an online nationwide survey of over 50,000 participants participating in national longitudinal cohort studies to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic:

### 1. MRC National Survey of Health and Development (1946 British birth cohort study)

The oldest and longest running of the British birth cohort studies; it follows the lives of 5,362 men and women born in England, Scotland or Wales in March 1946.

### 2. 1958 National Child Development Study (1958 British birth cohort study)

This study follows the lives of 17,415 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week of 1958.

### 3. 1970 British birth cohort study

This study follows the lives of 17,198 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week of 1970.

### 4. Millennium Cohort Study (Child of the New Century)

This study follows the lives of 19,517 children born across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2000-01.

### 5. Next Steps

This study began following 16,000 young people who were in Year 9 in 2004 at state or independent secondary schools across England.

### 6. Understanding Society: The UK Household Longitudinal Study

Understanding Society is the largest longitudinal household panel study of its kind, following 40,000 UK households annually.

From April, participants from the Understanding Society study have been asked to complete a short web-survey once a month. This survey covers the changing impact of the pandemic on individuals, families and wider communities.

### 7. Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (Children of the 90s)

Established in 1991, the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) charts the lives of 14,500 people born in the former county of Avon between April 1991 and December 1992 as well as the lives of their parents and their children

In April, ALSPAC launched a COVID-19 online questionnaire, covering short term symptoms and longer-term impacts of the pandemic.

### 8. The Born in Bradford (BiB) study

This study is tracking the health and wellbeing of over 13,500 children, and their parents born at Bradford Royal Infirmary between March 2007 and December 2010.

Born in Bradford are assessing the impact of the COVID-19 response (including lockdown, social distancing, self-isolation, school closures, remote working) on communities and families. They are starting with surveys of three key groups to assess difficulties, both practical and psychological, which will be repeated over the coming year to build a longitudinal picture of impact.

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7 May 2020

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