

# NatCen

Social Research that works for society

# NatCen Panel – December 2018

Technical information –  
MDMD | My Death, My Decision



Date: February 2019

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# Introduction

In December 2018, NatCen conducted a survey amongst its panel members on behalf of the My Death, My Decision (MDMD) to investigate the public opinion on medically assisted dying when an incurable medical condition has been diagnosed.

This document outlines some of the technical information related to the survey and associated dataset, including what data are included, questionnaire wording, the sample design, fieldwork approach, and information on the weighting approach.

If you have any questions about the data, or the information in this document, please get in touch at [panel.info@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:panel.info@natcen.ac.uk).

## Key figures

<b>Fieldwork dates</b>	16/11/2018 – 16/12/2018
<b>Total complete interviews</b>	2,708
<b>Web interviews</b>	2,336 (86%)
<b>Telephone interviews</b>	372 (14%)
<b>Survey response rate</b>	57%
<b>Overall response rate</b>	15%

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# 1 Survey dataset

This section summarises the information included in the survey dataset.

## 1.1 Sampling & weighting information

### 1.1.1 Sampling information

As the sample design for the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA) (and therefore the NatCen Panel which is recruited via the BSA survey) involves stratification and clustering (see Section 2), these design features affect standard errors and should therefore be taken into account in analysis, and variables are provided to allow for this:

- SPoint indicates the Primary Sampling Unit from which the panellist was recruited in their BSA survey
- StratID indicates the sampling stratum from which the panellist was selected

### 1.1.2 Non-response weight<sup>1</sup>

As a random probability sample, estimates are affected by non-coverage and non-response. In order to ensure the sample is representative of the population, a set of non-response weights has been computed to account for non-response to the recruitment survey (BSA), refusal to join the panel, and non-response in the survey of panel members itself.

Dec18\_Weight is a product of these three weights, and should be used for the general analysis of the survey results.

## 1.2 Survey paradata

Two of the features of the NatCen panel that distinguish it from other methods used in polling are that it uses both web and telephone fieldwork to boost response rates and allow coverage of those without access to the internet, and that it uses a longer fieldwork period to ensure everyone has the opportunity to take part, not just those that are 'readily available'.

Two pieces of survey paradata are included in the dataset to reflect these features:

- Dec18\_IntDate gives the date on which the survey was completed
- Dec18\_IntMode gives the mode in which the survey was completed (online or on the telephone)

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<sup>1</sup> More information about the non-response weight is provided in Section 3

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## 1.3 Questionnaire data

The datasets include all substantive questions carried by the survey and funded by The Wellcome Trust. Variables from this wave of the questionnaire are indicated in the variable name with the preface 'Dec18\_MDMD\_'. The questionnaire content is shown in Section 4, indicating variable names.

## 1.4 Fed-forward data

One of the features of the NatCen Panel is that, because it was recruited via the face-to-face British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, and our panellists are interviewed regularly, we possess a wealth of background information on our panellists. This not only allows us to develop better response propensity models (Section 3), but also allows for analysis by a greater range of background variables<sup>2</sup>.

These variables are indicated with the preface 'FF\_' where the data is directly from the BSA questionnaire, or 'Cur\_' where it has been subsequently updated.

The following variables are included in this dataset as standard:

- Fed-forward Sex
- Fed-forward respondent's NS-SEC analytic class (grouped) (DV)
- Fed-forward whether respondent has long-standing condition that affects day-to-day life (DV)
- Latest age category (grouped) (DV)
- Latest highest educational qualification achieved
- Latest class identity
- Latest main economic activity (grouped) (DV)
- Latest subjective income
- Latest household income (grouped)
- Latest tenure (grouped)
- Latest number of people in household collapsed (DV)
- Latest household type (DV)
- Latest relationship status (grouped)
- Latest whether respondent has any children (0-18) in the household (DV)
- Latest urban/rural indicator 2011 (England & Wales) (grouped - DV)
- Latest urban/rural indicator 2011 (Scotland) (grouped - DV)
- Latest government office region (DV)
- Latest internet use (grouped)
- Latest political party identification (grouped)
- Equivalised income (4 categories)
- Ethnicity (6 categories)

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that the data for these variables may have been collected before the panel survey was conducted.

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## 2 Sampling and fieldwork

NatCen's panel is based on a random probability design, with panel members originally selected at random and considerable effort put in to maximise participation in order to minimise bias.

### 2.1 BSA recruitment

Panel members are recruited from the British Social Attitudes survey (BSA) which interviews those aged 18 and over across Britain (south of the Caledonian canal). The BSA is a high-quality, random probability face-to-face survey: this means that households and individuals are selected at random, and then considerable effort is expended by field interviewers to achieve an interview, including visiting the selected addresses multiple times.<sup>3</sup>

Those interviewed as part of the BSA were asked to join the Panel at the end of the BSA interview. For this survey, all panel members recruited from BSA 2017 and 2018 who had not subsequently left the panel were approached to participate (no quotas were used) and the random probability design was therefore maintained.

### 2.2 Panel fieldwork

#### 2.2.1 Fieldwork design

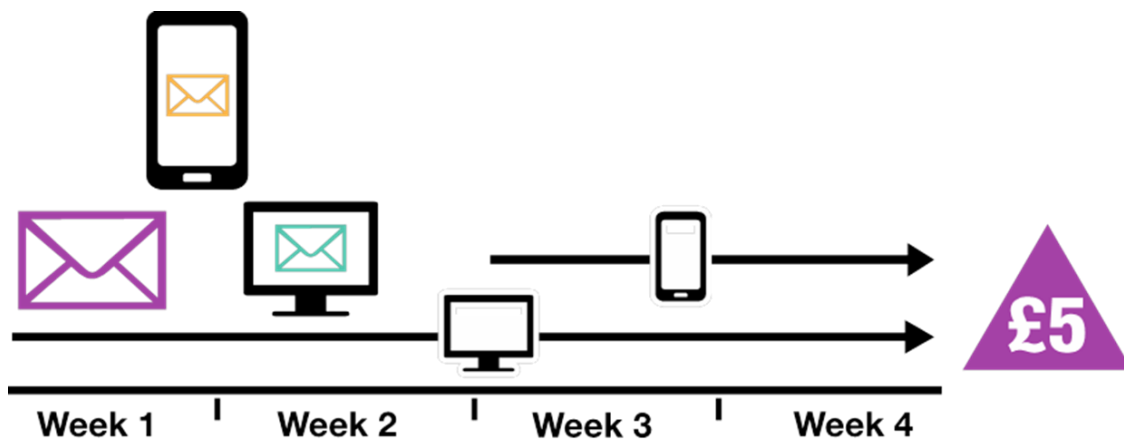
The fieldwork approach for the panel survey employed a sequential mixed mode design, where panel members were first invited to participate in the research online (using multiple points of contact by post, email and text) before being contacted by telephone if they had not yet completed the interview after two weeks (and if telephone numbers were available). In this way we were able to access those who do not have regular access to the internet or, for instance, those who may have literacy or language barriers. A £5 love to shop gift card was sent as a 'thank you' to those who participated.

At this wave we have targeted our design somewhat to improve the sample quality. Participants that have taken part in the past but never taken part online were issued to telephone fieldwork one week early. Also, effort was balanced away from those who are typically over-represented in the sample and that take part regularly, and targeted at those who are under-represented in the sample and take part less regularly.

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<sup>3</sup> More details of the BSA sampling approach can be found here: <http://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-35/technical-details.aspx>

Figure 2:1 Fieldwork design



In contrast to conventional internet or telephone polls, the fieldwork period lasted for 31 days. This was to ensure that we could make repeated attempts to contact the selected individuals to try to secure their participation, rather than only including those that are ‘readily’ available. Web fieldwork ran from 16<sup>th</sup> November to 16<sup>th</sup> December and Telephone fieldwork ran from 22<sup>st</sup> November to 16<sup>th</sup> December.

## 2.2.2 Response rates

The probability design allows us to apply statistical theory to the study, including tests of statistical significance or the ‘margin of error’. Response rates are a simple indicator of quality for surveys of this sort and are provided in Table 2:1. This survey achieved a 57% response rate among those panellists invited to participate. When taking account of non-response at the BSA interview and then also at the point of recruitment to the panel, our overall response rate was 15%.

Table 2:1 Survey response	
<b>Response to the survey</b>	
Issued	4,775
Deadwood	0
Achieved	2,708
<b>Survey response rate</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Overall response</b>	
BSA issued	19,942
BSA deadwood	1,914
BSA productive	7,867
Recruited to panel	4,993
BSA response rate	44%
Panel recruitment rate	63%
Panel deadwood	5
<b>Overall survey response rate</b>	<b>15%</b>



## 2.3 Sample profile

### 2.3.1 Socio-demographics

Table 2:2 Sample profile – socio-demographics

	BSA population estimate (weighted) <sup>4</sup>	Panel survey estimate (weighted)	Panel survey sample (unweighted)
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	49%	49%	43%
Female	51%	51%	57%
<b>Age</b>			
18-24	11%	11%	4%
25-34	17%	17%	13%
35-44	16%	17%	18%
45-54	18%	18%	19%
55-64	15%	15%	19%
65+	23%	21%	26%
<b>Region</b>			
North East	4%	4%	4%
North West	11%	11%	12%
Yorkshire and The Humber	8%	9%	10%
East Midlands	7%	8%	9%
West Midlands	9%	9%	8%
East of England	10%	10%	11%
London	13%	13%	10%
South East	14%	14%	15%
South West	9%	9%	10%
Wales	5%	5%	5%
Scotland	9%	9%	7%
<b>Social grade</b>			
Managerial & Professional occupations	39%	39%	51%
Intermediate occupations	12%	12%	13%
Small employers & own account workers	9%	8%	8%
Lower supervisory & technical occupations	8%	8%	7%
Semi-routine & routine occupations	27%	29%	20%

<sup>4</sup> Estimates are based on combined BSA 2017 & 2018 datasets, each weighted to reflect the population at the time.

<b>Highest level of education</b>			
Degree	27%	27%	35%
Higher education below degree	11%	11%	13%
A level or equivalent	18%	18%	18%
O level/CSE or equivalent	26%	26%	24%
Foreign or other	2%	2%	1%
No qualifications	16%	16%	9%
<b>Household type</b>			
Single person household	17%	17%	27%
Lone parent	3%	4%	6%
2 adults (no children)	37%	38%	37%
2 adults (with children)	20%	20%	19%
3+ adults (no children)	15%	14%	8%
3+ adults (with children)	7%	6%	3%
<b>Economic activity</b>			
Full time education	5%	5%	2%
Paid work	56%	57%	55%
Unemployed	5%	6%	4%
Retired	24%	23%	29%
Other	10%	9%	10%
<b>Tenure</b>			
Owned/being bought	63%	63%	72%
Rented (LA)	10%	9%	7%
Rented (HA/Trust/New Town)	7%	8%	7%
Rented (Other)	18%	19%	14%
Other	1%	1%	1%
<i>Unweighted base</i>	<i>7,882</i>	<i>2,708</i>	<i>2,708</i>

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## 3 Non-response weights

Non-response for NatGen's probability panel surveys can occur at three stages: non-response at the survey used for recruitment (the British Social Attitudes survey), refusal to join the panel at the end of that interview and non-response in the survey of panel members itself. We compute a weight to account for non-response at each of these three stages. The final weight (Dec18\_Weight) is the product of these three weights. We use this three-stage system because the variables underlying non-response could be different at each stage. With this system we also can maximise the use of all the information available from the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA). These are the three weights we have computed:

- a. **BSA survey weight:** the panel members were recruited from the BSA 2017 and BSA 2018. Firstly, the BSA weights account for unequal chances of selection in the BSA sampling. Secondly, a non-response model is used to produce a non-response weight. This weight adjusts for non-response at the BSA survey using: region, type of dwelling, whether there were entry barriers to the selected address, the relative condition of the immediate local area, the relative condition of the address, the percentage of owner occupied properties in quintiles and population density. Finally, the BSA weights make the sample of BSA respondents representative of the general British population in terms of gender, age and Government Office Region (GOR).<sup>5</sup>
- b. **Panel weight:** this weight accounts for non-response at the panel recruitment stage where some people interviewed as part of the BSA survey chose not to join the panel. A logistic regression model has been used to derive the probability of response of each panel member; the panel weight is computed as the inverse of the probabilities of response. This weight adjusts the panel for non-response using the following variables: age and sex groups, GOR, BSA year, household type, household income, education level, internet access, ethnicity, tenure, social class group, economic activity, political party identification, and interest in politics.<sup>6</sup> The resulting panel weight has been multiplied by the BSA weights, so the panel is representative of the population.
- c. **Survey weight:** this weight is to adjust the bias caused by non-response to this particular panel survey. A logistic regression model has been used to compute the probabilities of response of each participant. The panel survey weight is equal to the inverse of the probabilities of response. The initial set of predictors used to build the model was the same as for the panel weight; and at this wave the final set of variables used was also the same. The final survey weight is the result of multiplying the survey weight by the compounded panel weight.

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<sup>5</sup> More details on the BSA weight can be found at <http://bsa.natcen.ac.uk/latest-report/british-social-attitudes-33/technical-details.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> The characteristics that are likely to change with time for an individual and whose distribution differed between 2017 and 2018 BSA sample have been entered into the model in interaction with BSA year.

## 4 Questionnaire specification

### Name1

IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 1 Name1 = "John"  
IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 2 Name1 = "Hannah"

### Name2

IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 1 Name2 = "Steve"  
IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 2 Name2 = "Annabel"

### HisHer1

IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 1 HisHer1 = "His"  
IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 2 HisHer1 = "Her"

### HisHer2

IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 1 HisHer2 = "his"  
IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 2 HisHer2 = "her"

### HeShe1

IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 1 HeShe1 = "He"  
IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 2 HeShe1 = "She"

### HeShe2

IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 1 HeShe2 = "he"  
IF Dec18SampSplit2 = 2 HeShe2 = "she"

### TextFill1

IF Dec18SampSplit3 = 1 TextFill1 = "cause {HisHer2} death in the next 6 months"  
IF Dec18SampSplit3 = 2 TextFill1 = "eventually cause {HisHer2} death"  
IF Dec18SampSplit3 = 3 TextFill1 = "<b>not</b> be the direct cause of {HisHer2} death"

{IF Dec18SampSplit4 = 1}

### Vign1 [FLIP SCALE]

"{Name1} has been diagnosed with an incurable medical condition that will {TextFill1}.

{HeShe1} is currently mentally competent, and has asked several times to be medically assisted to die because {HisHer2} quality of life has fallen permanently below a level {HeShe2} is willing to accept.

{HisHer1} case has been approved by two doctors and checked by independent professionals to ensure that this is {HisHer2} free and informed choice.

In your opinion, to what extent is it acceptable for a doctor to assist {Name1} to die?"

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

1. Always acceptable
2. Sometimes acceptable
3. Rarely acceptable
4. Never acceptable

{IF Dec18SampSplit4 = 2}

### Vign2 [FLIP SCALE]

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“{Name2} has been diagnosed with Alzheimer dementia, an incurable medical condition that will eventually cause {his/her} death but may take 7 or more years of decline to do so. Symptoms of late stage dementia include, among others, loss of mental capacity.

{HeShe1} is currently mentally competent, and has asked several times to be medically assisted to die <b>before</b> {HeShe2} loses mental capacity and {HisHer2} quality of life falls permanently below a level {HeShe2} is willing to accept.

{HisHer1} case has been approved by two doctors and checked by independent professionals to ensure that this is {HisHer2} free and informed choice.

Once {Name2} has lost mental capacity {HeShe2} would not be able to have a medically assisted death.

In your opinion, to what extent is it acceptable for a doctor to assist {Name2} to die at a time of {HisHer2} choosing <b>before</b> {HeShe2} loses mental capacity and {HisHer2} quality of life falls permanently below a level {HeShe2} is willing to accept?

INTERVIEWER: READ OUT

1. Always acceptable
2. Sometimes acceptable
3. Rarely acceptable
4. Never acceptable