

Labour Market User Group

Transformation of the Labour Force Survey

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15th November 2023

Agenda

- Current LFS Position
- Need for change?
- NI LMS Pilot Results
- Current LMS / Future plans
- Labour Market Updates – ASHE/QES/BRES/SBR
- Modernisation Programme – Data Collection / Statistical Production

Current LFS Position

LFS in GB

- Response rates have dropped significantly - ~20%
- Significant impact on the weighting of the LFS.
- Questionable results – concerns around the outcomes for some age groups.
- Alternative method – applying a growth rate in the interim based on HMRC RTI employee jobs growth for the employed and Claimant Count change for the unemployed.
- OSR have produced a report seeking assurances before LFS results are released for GB and the UK.

LFS in Northern Ireland

- The LFS response rate in NI is 50.5%.
- Analysis of the data for NI reveals that the data is robust.
- LFS continues to be the best source of LM data for NI.
- Significant quality assurance goes into the NI release each month.
- NISRA is confident of the quality of the data for measuring the NI Labour Market.

Need for Change?

Social Surveys

NISRA runs NI social surveys

- Health, Crime, Travel, Continuous Household Survey
- Family Resources Survey, Living Costs & Food Survey (UK focused)
- Labour Force Survey

All surveys run through fee-paid field force (face to face/telephone interviews)

250 interviewers – cover all of NI (50,000 addresses a year)

Some Surveys take 90 minutes – “too long?”

Falling response rates

Increasing costs Real Living Wage

Significant churn in interviewers since pandemic

No online response option

Online Surveys

2021 Census – successful online (85% of people replied online)

NISRA: Blaise 5 software infra-structure (started in 2015)

- Fully supports online self-response
- Detailed local experience in instrument design
- Used UK-wide for Infection Survey & in NI for 2021 Census

NISRA: Local Business Surveys all now predominantly online

Can we go online for social surveys?

Labour Force Survey

Flagship social survey – provides headline labour market figures

- currently in NI 45-50% response rate
- note 20% response rate in GB for current LFS

LFS works on Wave structure (5 waves – gives stability to results)

In NI for more robust Labour Market numbers

- larger sample size – but costs more money.....

Need for change

Need to Move to online survey

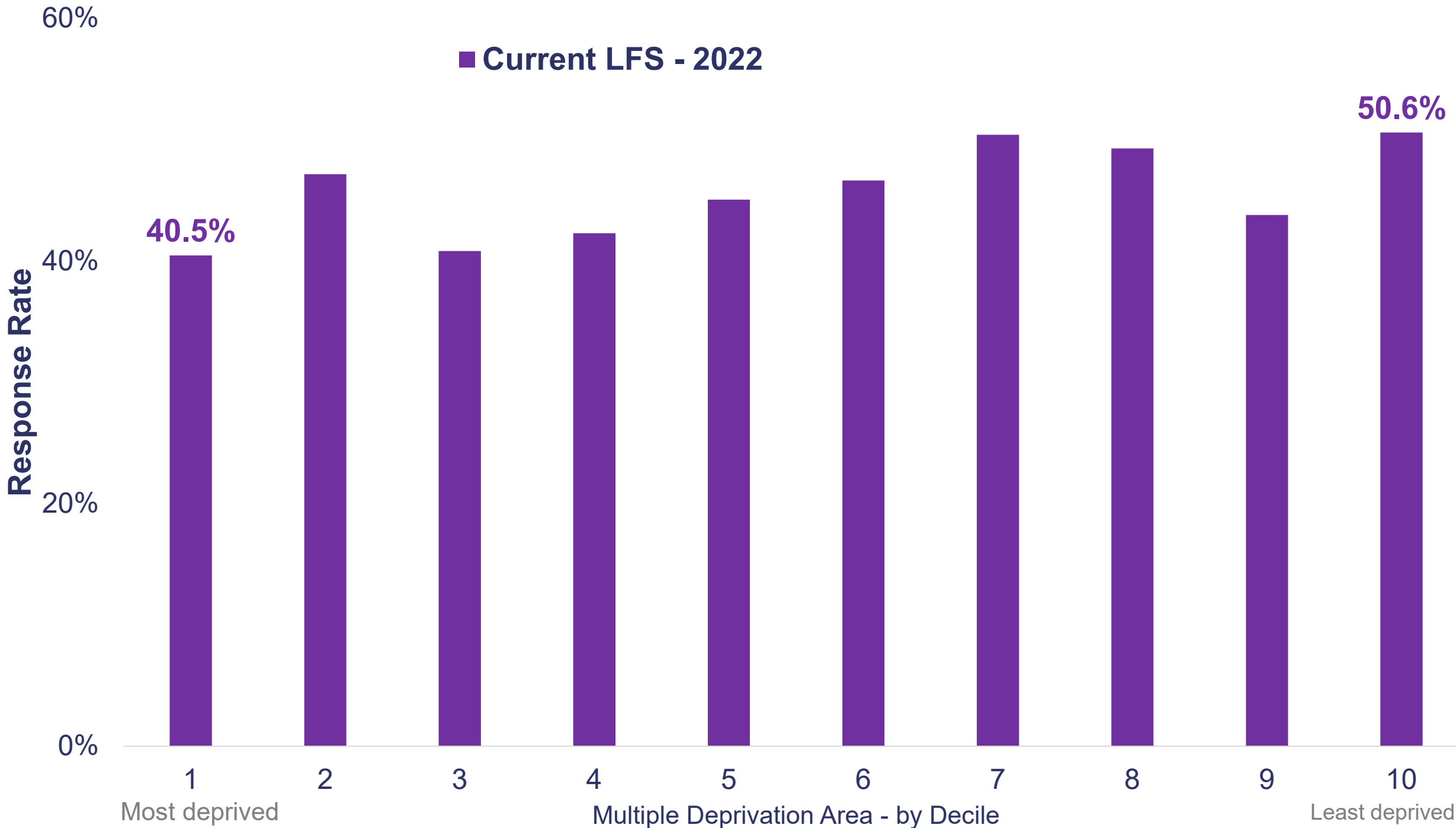
ONS no longer developing or updating the LFS

Interviewer-led questionnaire “bloated” (40+ minutes)

- “okish” for survey interviewer
- online self-response?

The ONS Transformed Labour Force Survey

- **ONS Transformed LFS questions to work online**
- **Also ran a trial in NI with a lift & shift of GB online questionnaire**



60%

■ TLFS Pilot – NI 2022

Lagan Valley	27.8%
East Antrim	28.8%
Belfast East	32.0%
Strangford	33.8%
North Down	37.3%

40%

35.0%

20%

12.3%

Belfast West	13.3%
Foyle	14.1%
Fermanagh & South Tyrone	16.3%
West Tyrone	18.7%
Newry & Armagh	20.3%

0%

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

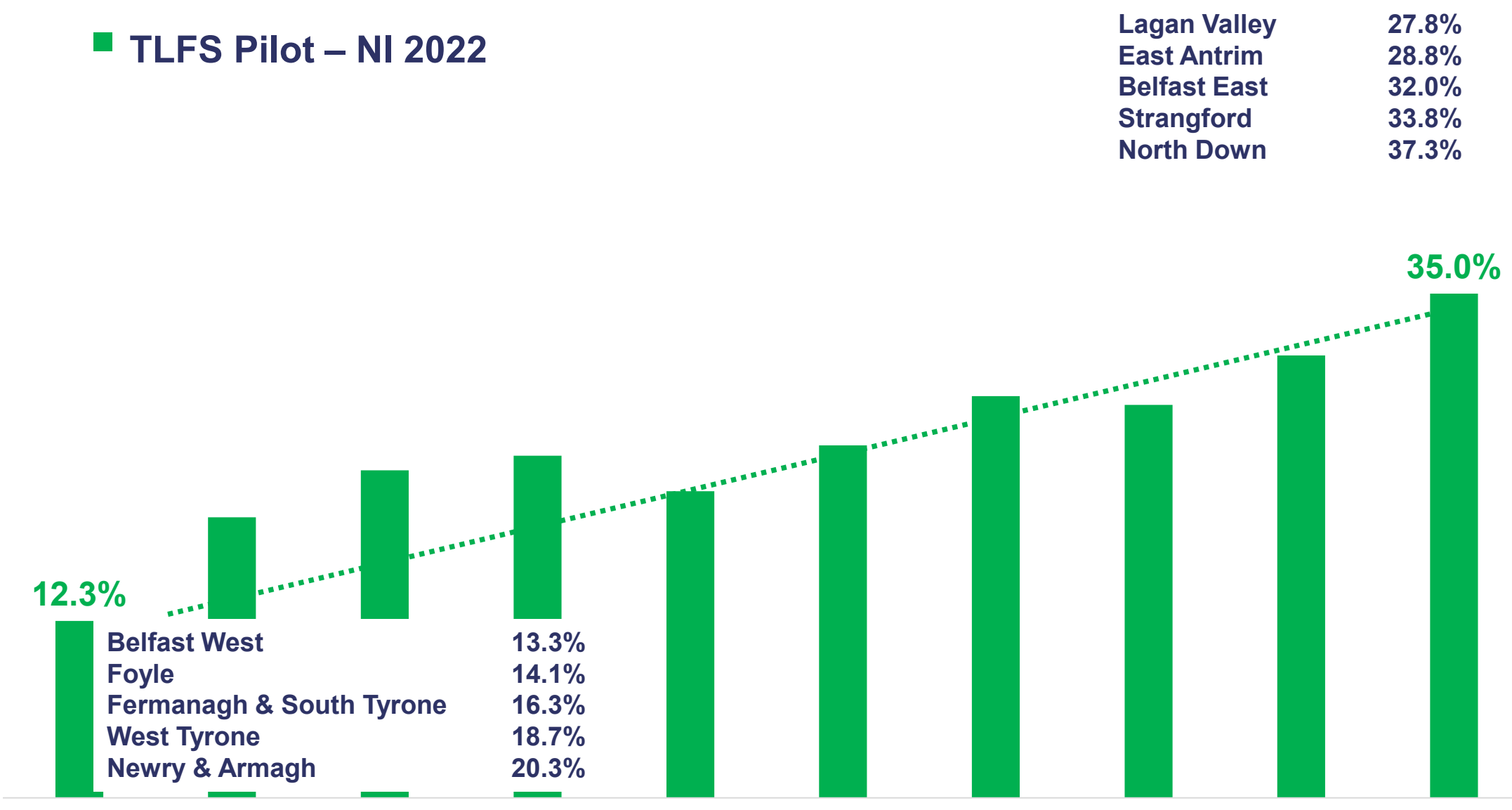
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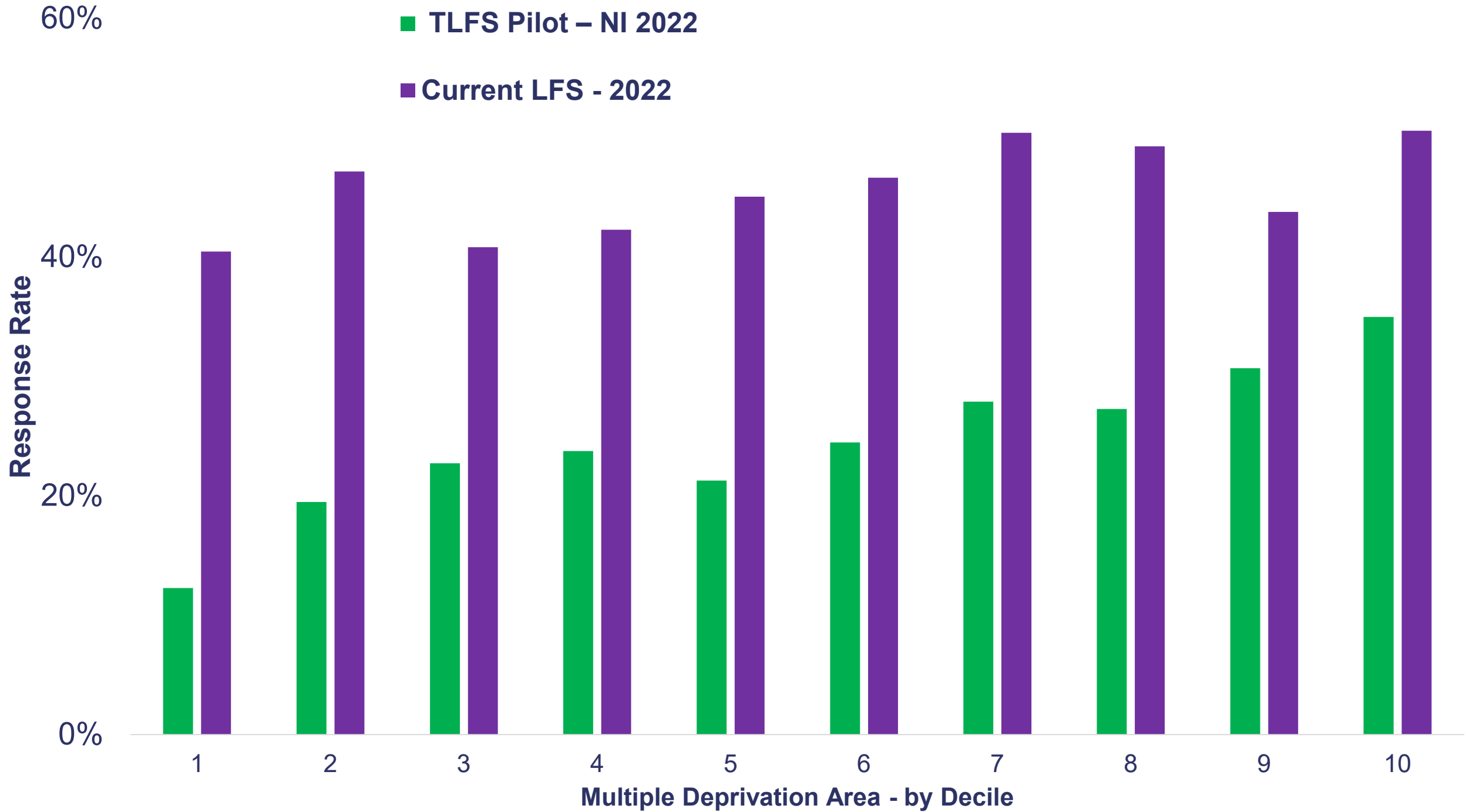
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Most deprived

Multiple Deprivation Area - by Decile

Least deprived





GB Transformed LFS Timing

GB TLFS (online & limited follow-up) Ongoing

GB TLFS runs alongside LFS

Decision point (Go/No Go) January 2024
If “Go”

Switch off LFS collection in GB January 2024?
First GB-TLFS outputs March 2024

NI will retain the LFS for now but given response rates in NI TLFS NISRA took the decision to design their own NI Labour Market Survey

Northern Ireland Labour Market Survey

- Public given up to two weeks to complete survey online
- Letter to public with internet access code & £10 voucher for self completion
- Reminder letters
- **And full field follow-up for non-responders @ Day 10**
- All NI focused correspondence

Increased sample size

Current LFS – quarterly: 1,300 new addresses (100 a week)

New LMS – quarterly: 2,210 new addresses (170 a week) – **up 70%**

Key target is 50% response rates

Retain wave structure (5 waves of interviews – gives stability to results)

LFS Data Processing

- **Last ONS UK-LFS data processing**
October – December 2023 collection
ONS process the data

- **First UK(GB/NI) - LMS & LFS data processing**
November – January 2024 collection
NI process data

UK data will be based on two different surveys from Jan 2024 onwards

LFS/LMS Data Processing

Processing Current NI-LFS in period September 2023 to December 2023

- NISRA currently pays ONS to process the data
- ONS will continue to process the data in this period

Processing Current NI-LFS in period January 2024 to Summer 2024

- NISRA will process the data in house and send agreed variables to ONS
- Agreed list of variables and testing continues with ONS
- Weighting/outputs production in place but continuing work with ONS to ensure consistency for the UK context

Processing NI-LMS from Summer 2024 onwards

- NISRA will process the LMS data in house and send agreed variables to ONS
- Decision on the change will be taken in late Spring 2024

NISRA had to set up a team to do data processing

Local NI focused questionnaire

- Self response changes the game
- Requires local focus - cannot lift & shift GB questionnaire

- Irish & Ulster-Scots language
- “Derry” / “Londonderry” in addresses
- Nationality / Religion questions +++

- **But key UK/ILO Labour Market constructs retained**

NI LMS Questionnaire

Frame & Household questions

Individual questions (Demography, Labour Market, Education & Training)

Demography (Age, Sex, Marital/CP status, Country of Birth, Passports held, National identity, Ethnic Group, Religion, Limiting long term illness)

Labour Market/Education (Employment Status, Job/Industry, Hours Worked, Second Job if any, Unemployed, Length of Unemployment, Economic Inactivity, Reason for Inactivity, Qualifications/Training)

Development of Northern Ireland specific online first questionnaire

NI Structure (driven from LMS-Core)

Frame section

Household question

Individual questions

- Household Enumeration, Relationships and Demographic Variables
- Labour Market
- Education and Training
- Highest Level of Qualifications

No Pay/Benefits detail

NI Structure

Frame/Household section

- Confirm address
- Who lives here
- DOB/Age and Sex
- Relationship grid

- Tenure (rent or own - NI specific)

Different from ONS – but broadly consistent

NI Issues for LMS (Household)

Different Local Arrangements (e.g. NI Housing Executive)

Current

How do you own or rent 323 ONS Street?

- Currently pay off a mortgage or loan used to purchase the property
- Own it outright
- Shared ownership (also known as 'part-own, part-rent')
- Pay rent to the council, housing association, or charitable trust
- Pay rent to a private landlord
- Don't know

Does your household own or rent Great Lamar Street?

Select one option only.

- Owned outright
- Owned with a mortgage or loan
- Part-owned and part-rented
Shared ownership
- Rented
With or without housing benefit
- Lived here rent-free

New

Who do you rent from?

Select one option only.

- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- Housing association or charitable trust
- Private landlord
- Private renting with a letting agent
- Employer of a household member
- Relative or friend of a household member
- Other

NI Structure

Demography section

- Proxy
- Marital/CP status
- Country of Birth
- Passports held
- National identity
- Ethnic Group
- Religion
- Limiting long term illness question (any llti, expected to last > 12mths, degree of limitation)

Shorter than ONS – consistent but less detail and NI specific

Differences between TLFS and LMS

ONS - TLFS	NISRA - LMS
Starting January 2024	Starting Summer 2024
Longer Questionnaire - over 400 Qs	Shorter questionnaire - around 150 Qs
50 mins plus per HH	Around 15 mins per HH
Interviewers encourage online completion	Interviewers carry out interview
Targeted follow-up	All non-response followed up
Large wave 1 but smaller sample for wave 2	All HH included in all waves
Same questionnaire for each wave	Will remove some Qs that don't change for subsequent waves

Pilot Evaluation

May 2023

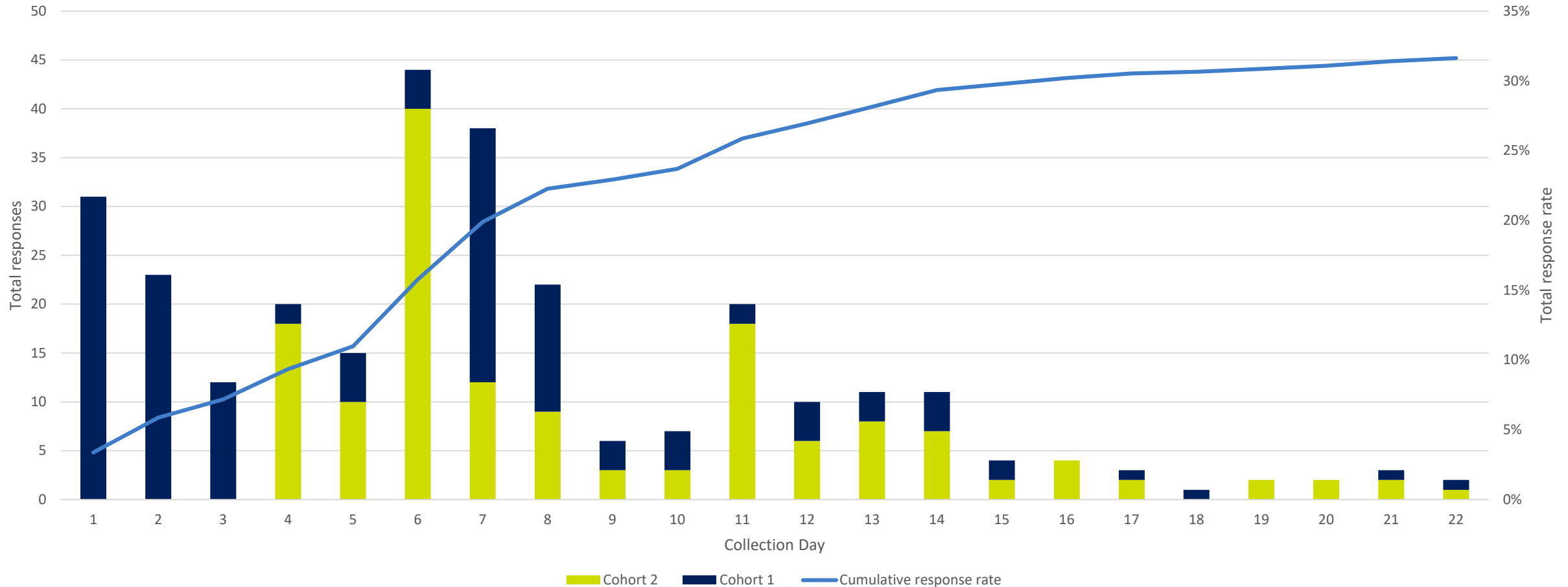
Response Rate by Cohort

	Eligible sample size	Full completes		Partial completes		Total full & partial completes	
Total	920	256	27.8%	35	3.8%	291	31.6%

No interviewer follow up in pilot

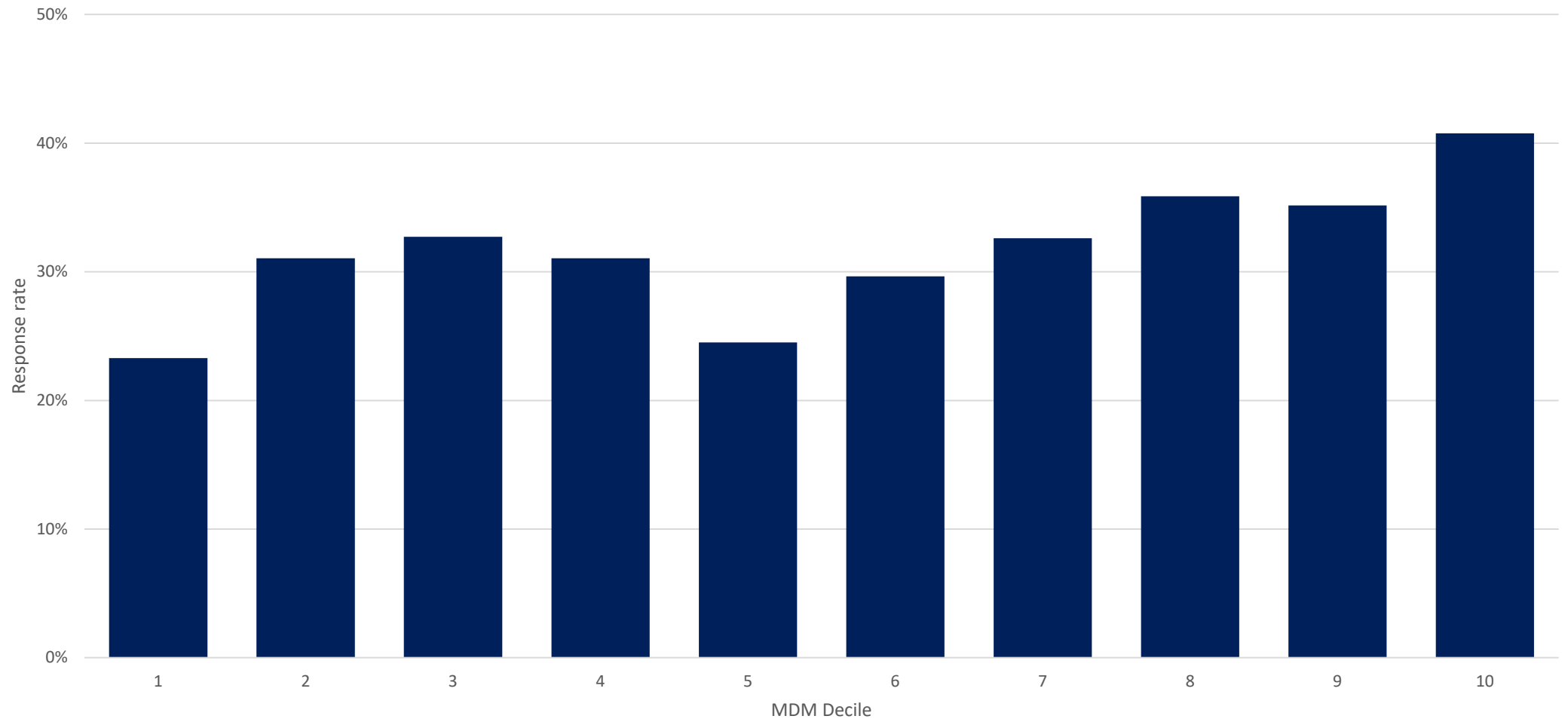
Number of responses by collection day and cumulative response rate

Cumulative response rate and responses by day



Response rates by MDM

Response rate by MDM 2017



Household interview time taken for full telephone completes

Household size	Number of households	Percentage of households	Time taken (minutes and seconds)			
			Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
1	12	60.0%	05:00	05:30	02:46	12:34
2	8	40.0%	07:07	07:15	05:47	08:59
Total	20	100.0%	04:15	05:12	02:46	12:34

5 minutes to complete for single person households

Lessons Learned

- Little difference in response between tote bag and no tote bag
- Larger HHs more likely to drop out or not complete later sections – restructured questionnaire to collect minimum data on children
- Delivery of survey communications to addresses is not guaranteed in a short timeframe
- Need to offer option of telephone interview – (older people)

LMS Current Plans

Northern Ireland Labour Market Survey – GO LIVE 2nd Oct 2023

- Household given up to two weeks to complete survey online
- Letter sent with internet access code & offered £10 voucher for self completion
- Reminder letters after 1 week
- Full field follow-up for non-responders @ Day 10 and offer of doorstep interview

Increased sample size

Current LFS – quarterly: 1,300 new addresses (100 a week)

New LMS – quarterly: 2,210 new addresses (170 a week)

Key target is 50% even response rates

Retain wave structure (5 waves of interviews – gives stability to results)

Developing Wave 2 – what Qs can be dropped to leave room for work quality to ensure completion time is quicker.

Current LMS

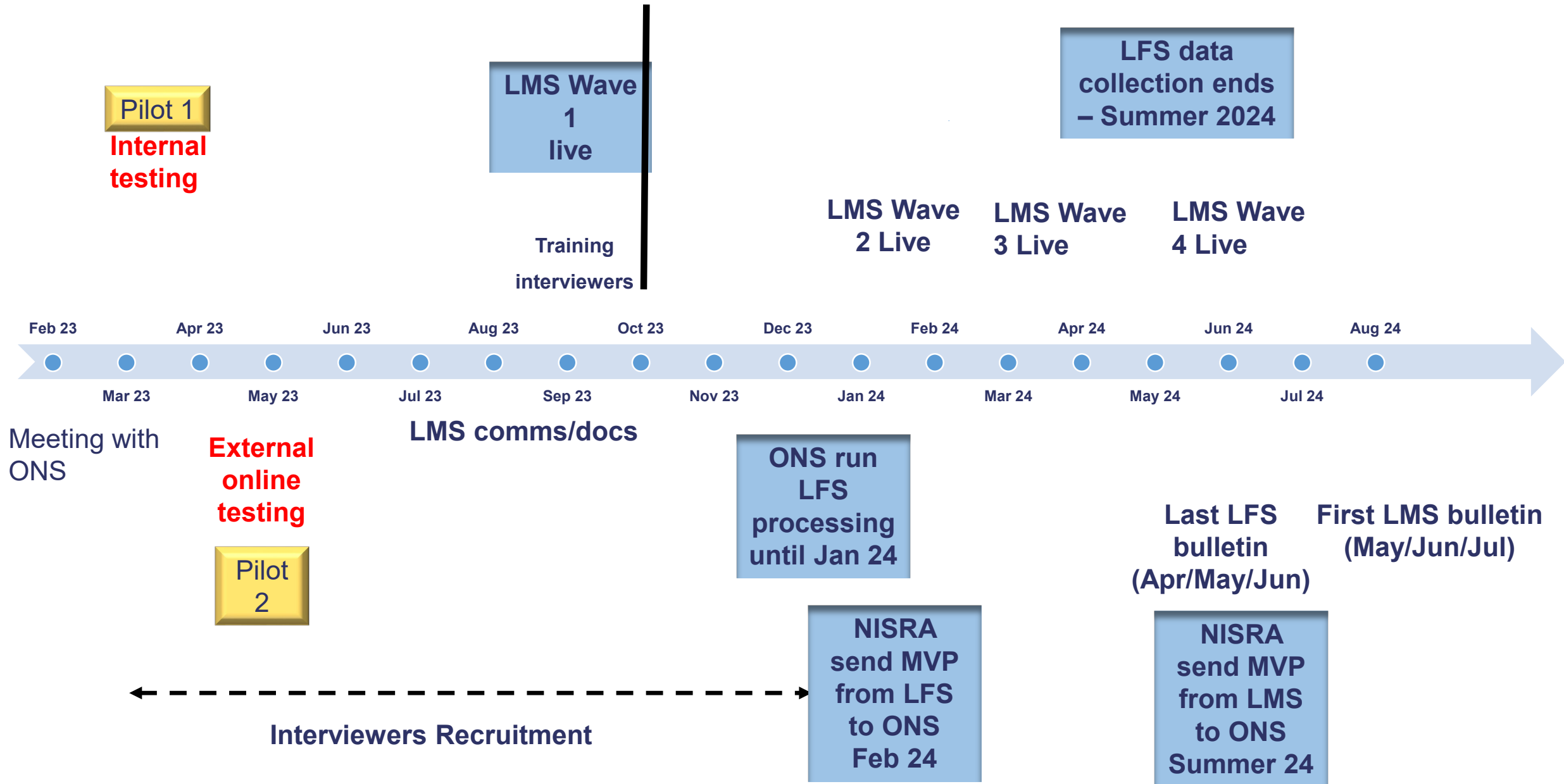
- 170 cases per week: 4 cohorts thus far
- Overall response rate – 60.4% (vast majority full completes)

	AA1		AB1		AC1		AD1		Total
Full completes	92	93%	83	95%	85	93%	89	96%	349
Partial completes	7	7%	4	5%	6	7%	4	4%	21
Total completions	99	100%	87	100%	91	100%	93	100%	374
Full completion rate	59.5%		53.7%		54.9%		57.5%		
Partial completion rate	4.5%		2.6%		3.9%		2.6%		
Total survey response rate	64.0%		56.2%		58.8%		60.1%		60.4%
Eligible sample	155		155		155		155		619

LFS and LMS will run in parallel from Oct 2023 until Summer 2024

- This will allow time for testing, questionnaire changes, data processing to be developed and understanding of how the data may change under self response.
- We will use the time to get feedback from users and interviewers about any issues.
- Expect to have similar costs to LFS – increased sample size but reduced interviewer time.

Broad Timeplan



Earnings

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)

2022 ASHE Pensions Results

Due to unavoidable delays in data being provided by the ONS, NISRA was unable to publish the ASHE Pensions Results for 2022.



It is currently anticipated that Statistics based on final data for 2022 will be provided along with final data for 2021 in Spring 2024.

We apologise for any inconvenience that this may cause our users.

ASHE Outputs

1st November
9:30am

HTML
format
(2nd year)

ASHE
2023

ASHE
Dashboard

1. Overview of earnings
2. Focus on real earnings
3. Low & high pay analysis
4. Gender pay gap

Data
portal

Accessible
tables
(Final tables to follow)

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

Quarterly Employment Survey (QES)

Overview

- Quarterly Employment Survey was one of the outputs consulted on as part of the NISRA outputs consultation.

Proposed change:

The statistical bulletin will be reduced to headline results only; some further analysis will be removed (for example Composition of Employee Jobs (Full-time/Parttime) and UK Comparisons). The bulletin will be reduced from 25 pages to approximately 5 pages. Data will continue to be provided in the existing supplementary tables, with the number of supplementary tables remaining the same (approximately 15 tables).

Date proposed change will come into effect: **12 December 2023**

You said:

- NISRA received comments from a wide range of stakeholders on the proposal to scale back the QES.
- A number of comments were supportive of the proposals to scale back the statistical bulletin and recognised that the underlying data would remain available in supplementary tables.
- Some users expressed concern that the data would be less accessible to non-statistical audiences as a result of scaling back the publication.

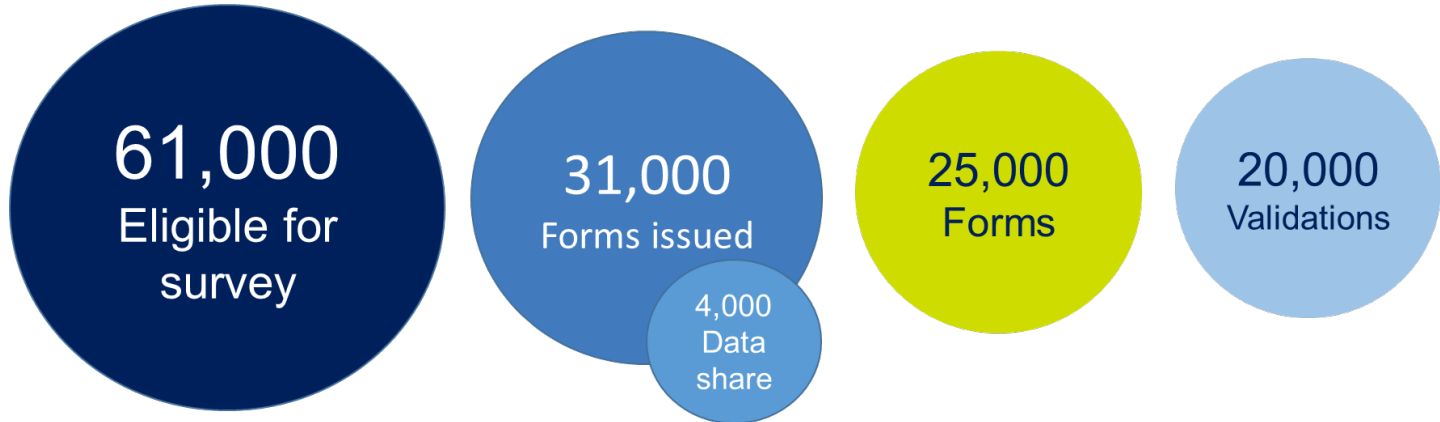
Action:

- NISRA will proceed with scaling back the statistical bulletin as planned but recognises the wide range of uses of the supplementary data and will consider what detailed analysis should continue to be included in the statistical bulletin.

Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES)

BRES 2022

1. BRES 2022 was a 'Big BRES'.



2. Improved presentation of accuracy.

Co-efficient of Variation = Standard Error/Estimate

Male Full-Time	Male Part-Time	Male	Female Full-Time	Female Part-Time	Female	Total
277	85	362	37	45	82	444
209	23	232	17	25	42	274
241	33	274	13	24	37	311
*	*	*	*	*	*	30
1,614	43	1,657	208	53	261	1,918
*	*	*	*	*	*	78
13,302	918	14,220	5,907	1,454	7,361	21,581
723	44	767	138	50	187	954
*	*	*	*	*	*	*
1,641	77	1,718	797	201	998	2,716
426	10	436	422	39	462	898

Key

CV < 5%, which means estimates are considered precise

CV => 5% and < 10% which means estimates are considered reasonably precise

CV => 10% and < 20% which means estimates are considered acceptable

CV => 20% which means estimates should be used with caution

Statistical Business Register

- Currently working with ONS regarding the SBR – the replacement for the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR)
- Potential for access to additional information.
- Potential to change the way we deliver business surveys going forward.

Modernisation Programme

Data Collection System

- Currently working with supplier to deliver a new version of our data collection system.
- Key aim is to move online only from 2025.
- Increased engagement with businesses.
- Improve our data collection processes.
- Aim to support businesses as much as possible to complete business surveys.

Statistical Production Project

- Key aim is to automate statistical production processes.
- This will enable teams to analyse and produce results more quickly.
- Requires significant resource and training.
- Potential to improve efficiency and quality of statistics.

Questions?