

Profile of the South Downs National Park Citizens Panel in October 2018

Final report

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Author

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1. Introduction

Between 31st July and 29th August 2017, 2,010 residents living either in or within 10km of the South Downs National Park were recruited to the first South Downs National Park Citizens Panel.

In the last year, panel members have been asked to take part in two surveys, one in October 2017 and one in April 2018. Both surveys achieved good response rates of 49% and 41% respectively, however it was clear that a significant proportion of the panel were not participating in the surveys that they had signed up to. In May 2018, Walnut Unlimited¹ ran some diagnostics on the panel to investigate who had responded to at least one of the two panel surveys and who had not responded to either².

Panel members who had opted to be surveyed by post instead of online (the more expensive of the two survey methods) and who had done *neither* survey were automatically removed from the panel. The remainder were called to see if they still wanted to be on the panel and a proportion of those declined to be on the panel anymore. With the remaining budget Walnut were able to recruit 474 new panel members, alongside the remaining 1,147 panel members to bring the panel size up to **1,621** individuals.

It is anticipated that with increased communication with panel members³ and close monitoring of survey response rates we will continue to see response rates rise with this refreshed panel.

This short report provides an update on the profile of the citizens panel as of October 2018.

¹ The agency who manages our panel

² Note that in April 2018 the panel consisted of 1,780 people as 230 people had left the panel

³ In August 2018, the Performance and Research Lead and the Senior Media Officer wrote the first quarterly e-newsletter for online panel members which Walnut emailed to panel members. 53% of online panel members opened the newsletter, a very good open rate. The purpose of the e-newsletter is to update panel members on recent survey findings and how the Authority is utilising the results from the panel surveys, as well as highlighting key events and other initiatives taking place in the National Park.



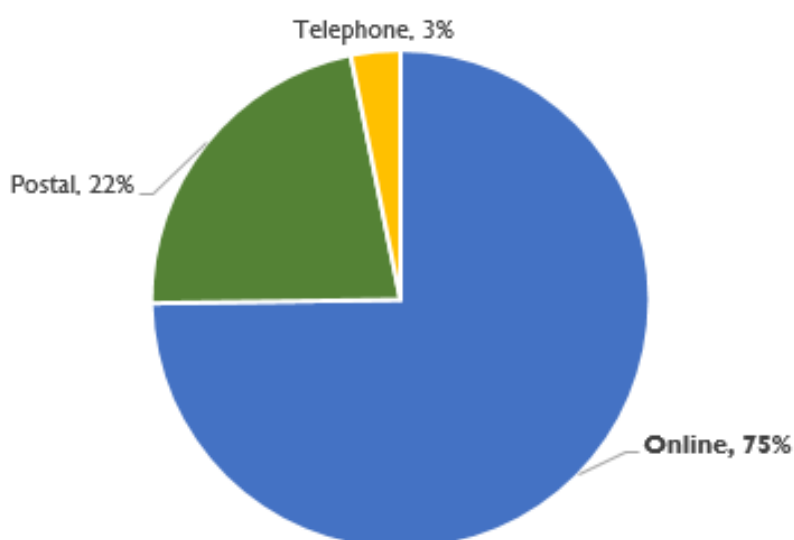
2. Profile of the SDNP Citizens Panel in October 2018

2.1 Whether panel signed up for online, telephone or postal surveys

When the citizens panel was recruited in summer 2017, people were offered the opportunity to participate in surveys either online or by post. This resulted in an unexpectedly high 43% of panel members signing up to be surveyed by post. As postal surveys are seven times more expensive than online surveys, the Authority decided that moving forwards, new panel recruits would no longer be offered the opportunity to receive surveys by post and would only be offered the option to participate in online or telephone surveys.

It is heartening to note that, as of October 2018, we have reduced the proportion of panel members opting for postal surveys from 43% to 22%. This is due in large part to only keeping highly engaged postal members on the panel. In addition a number of postal members opted to undertake future surveys by telephone or online. It is anticipated that the proportion of postal panel members will further reduce as time goes on and more of them are persuaded to change to online or telephone survey methods for reasons of cost.

The chart below highlights the proportion of panel members who have agreed to be surveyed either online, by post or by telephone.



2.2 Gender profile of panel members

53% of panel members are **female** and 47% are **male**. This is slightly more balanced than in 2017 when 57% of panel members were female and 43% were male.

2.3 Age profile of panel members

The current **age** profile of the panel is shown in the table below, compared against the 2017 age profile. Whilst we have recruited slightly more 18-24 and 25-34 year olds by purchasing specially targeted sample and more mobile telephone numbers, the older age groups still form the vast majority of the panel.

If we wish to recruit a higher proportion of younger people to the panel then the method of reaching these people will need to be reviewed. For example face to face recruitment might work better but this naturally has cost implications, being significantly more expensive than telephone recruitment.

Age range	Proportion in 2018 after refreshment	Proportion in 2017 after recruitment
18-24	3%	2%
25-34	6%	5%
35-44	10%	10%
45-54	23%	21%
55-64	25%	24%
65 and over	32%	37%
Base – all who provided their age	1,606	1,983

Note that an even proportion of males and females are represented in the above age groups.

2.4 Ethnic profile of panel members

The vast majority of panel members are **White British** (93%). This is slightly higher than in 2017 when 90% classed themselves as such. As in 2017, 5% of panel members classified themselves as **White Other**, with the remaining 2% consisting of **Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Mixed race** or '**Other**' ethnic group.

Whilst the ethnic profile of members of the citizens panel does largely match that of the South Downs National Park residents⁴; as with younger people, if we wish to recruit a higher proportion of BAME people to the panel then face to face recruitment might yield more recruits but the cost of utilising this method may outweigh the benefits.

⁴ Source: 2011 Census data cut to the National Park boundary



2.5 Proportion of panel members with a limiting mental or physical health problem or disability

In the main, panel members stated that their day to day activities are *not limited* because of a **mental or physical health problem or disability** (91%). However, for 4% of panel members, their day to day activities are *limited a lot*, and for a further 5%, their day to day activities are *limited a little*. These proportions are broadly similar to the panel profile in 2017.

2.6 Panel members' working status

The table below shows that around a third of panel members (35%) are **retired**. This compares to 38% in 2017 and highlights the efforts made to recruit younger people to the panel. This is also reflected in the slightly higher proportion of panel members who are in **full time employment** (31% in 2018; 29% in 2017) or who are **self-employed** (15% in 2018; 13% in 2017).

Working status	Proportion in 2018 after refreshment	Proportion in 2017 after recruitment
Retired	35%	38%
Working full time	31%	29%
Self-employed	15%	13%
Working part time	12%	13%
All other categories	7%	7%
Base – all who gave their working status	1,604	1,975

The table below illustrates some interesting, and not entirely surprising variations between male and female panel members. For example, 37% of male panel members work **full time**, compared to a quarter of female panel members (25%). Females are also more likely to be working **part-time** and male panel members are more likely to be **self-employed**.

Working status	Male	Female	Male / female combined
Retired	36%	33%	35%
Working full time	37%	25%	31%
Self employed	17%	13%	15%
Working part time	5%	19%	12%
All other categories	4%	8%	7%
Base – all who gave their working status	755	849	1,604



2.7 Postcode areas panel members live

The **postcode** profile of panel members is broadly similar to that in 2017. However, there are marginally more panel members from the BN and SO postcode areas in 2018, and slightly fewer in the PO and RH postcode areas as shown in the table below:

Postcode	Proportion in 2018 after refreshment	Proportion in 2017 after recruitment
BN	38%	35%
GU	16%	16%
PO	24%	27%
RH	14%	15%
SO	9%	7%
Base	1,621	2,010

Note that an even proportion of males and females are represented in each of the postcode areas. In addition, the age proportions outlined in section 2.3 above are the same in each postcode area.

2.8 New questions asked in the 2018 refreshment exercise

Two new questions were asked of the **474 newly recruited** panel members in the 2018 refreshment exercise, as follows:

1) Do you live in or near the South Downs National Park?

The table below shows that just 19% of newly recruited panel members believe that they live **in** the National Park. This result is broadly similar to the spring 2018 survey where we asked panel members the same question.

Do you live in or near the SDNP?	2018 recruitment	2018 Spring survey
Live in the South Downs National Park	19%	23%
Live near the South Downs National Park	79%	74%
Not sure whether live in the South Downs National Park	4%	3%
Base	474 <i>newly recruited panel members</i>	727 <i>existing panel members</i>

These results are interesting given that we know 49% of panel members live **inside** the South Downs National Park and 51% live **near**, thus suggesting that many people are unaware that they live in the National Park – see table overleaf.



Postcode area	Those living INSIDE the SDNP		Those living NEAR the SDNP		TOTAL PANEL where have correct postcode
	% within postcode area	No. within postcode area	% within postcode area	No. within postcode area	
BN	62%	372	38%	228	602
GU	88%	227	12%	32	259
PO	26%	103	74%	286	389
RH	12%	26	88%	191	217
SO	41%	56	59%	81	137
Base	784 (49% panel)		818 (51% panel)		1,604

2) Who do you live with...?

In the main newly recruited panel members live either with a **spouse/partner** (41%) or with **family members** (40%). Around one in six (16%) live **alone**.

The table below shows that those in the **BN** and **RH** postcode areas are marginally more likely to **live alone**. Those in the **GU** postcode area are the most likely to **live with a spouse/partner**.

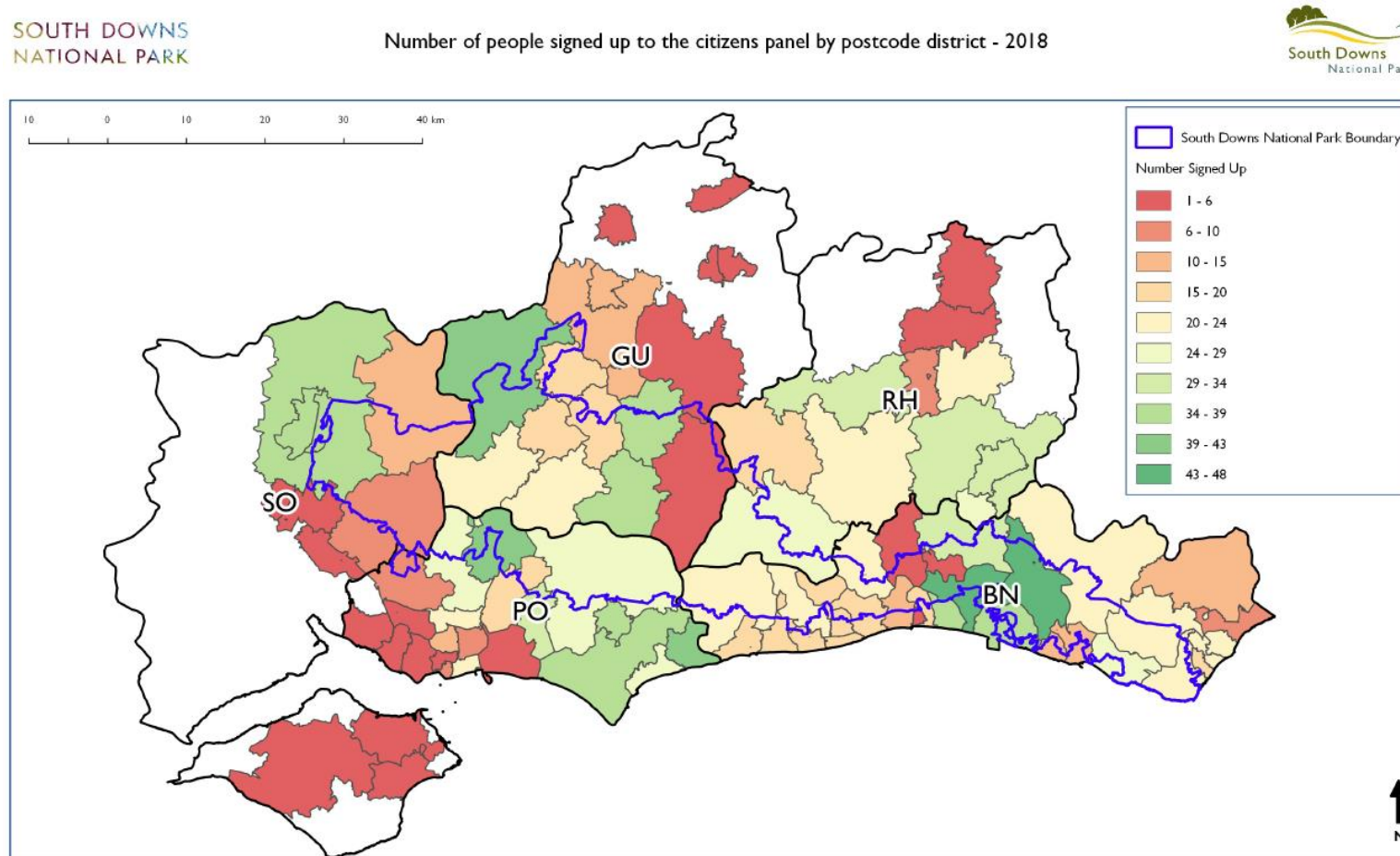
Those in the **PO** and **SO** postcode areas were the most likely to **live with family members**.

Who do you live with?	Postcode area					Total
	BN	GU	PO	RH	SO	
Live alone	18%	17%	15%	18%	7%	16%
Live with a spouse/partner	42%	53%	34%	38%	44%	41%
Live with family members – e.g. parents or children	37%	31%	47%	41%	49%	40%
Live with friend(s)	4%	0%	3%	1%	0%	1%
Other	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Base ('do not wish to answer' removed)	200	59	95	68	43	465



3. Map showing the postcode area profile of the SDNP Citizens Panel in 2018 compared to 2017

The map below shows the distribution of citizens panel members in each of the five postcode areas. It highlights the proportion who **live inside the National Park** and the proportion who **live within 10km of the National Park**. It shows that we have increased the proportion of panel members in some of our key areas. A higher proportion of panel members in 2018 live inside the National Park, whereas we had more panel members outside the Park in 2017.



The map below highlights the distribution of panel members in 2017 when a number of areas were underrepresented.

SOUTH DOWNS
NATIONAL PARK

Number of people signed up to the citizens panel by Postcode district

