

Impact Report 2024-25



Introduction

Since 1969, through moments of clarity and moments of uncertainty, the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) helps the UK to understand itself. We engage with and listen to the public, ensuring their voice and experience helps to shape the decisions and services that affect their lives. We show decision makers when and where society's expectations are shifting – and why it matters.

Our team of social researchers, survey methodologists, scientists, analysts and evaluators work to ensure our findings are surfaced amongst the relevant stakeholders. We achieve this through the variety of outputs we deliver; from comprehensive research reports and policy briefing papers to blogs, events and videos. We engage with Westminster and the devolved nations, Select Committees, All-Party Parliamentary Groups, as well as responding to government consultations.

Over the last 12 months, we launched the Society Behind the Stats podcast, which explored themes and trends covered by our flagship study, British Social Attitudes (BSA). In the ever-evolving social media landscape, we have expanded our presence across Bluesky and Instagram creating more accessible engaging bite-size content.

As part of our charitable mission to educate, we delivered just under 40 training courses to over 400 social science professionals in the sector through NatCen Learning. We take seriously the opportunity to support the social research sector, build capacity and empower excellence in social research.

We believe that where society stands today shapes where it moves tomorrow. That the seeds of the future are already here – in people's attitudes, behaviours, hopes, and values.

That's why our purpose is simple: **the power of understanding**. Listening to society without an agenda to reveal the issues that matter and solutions that work.

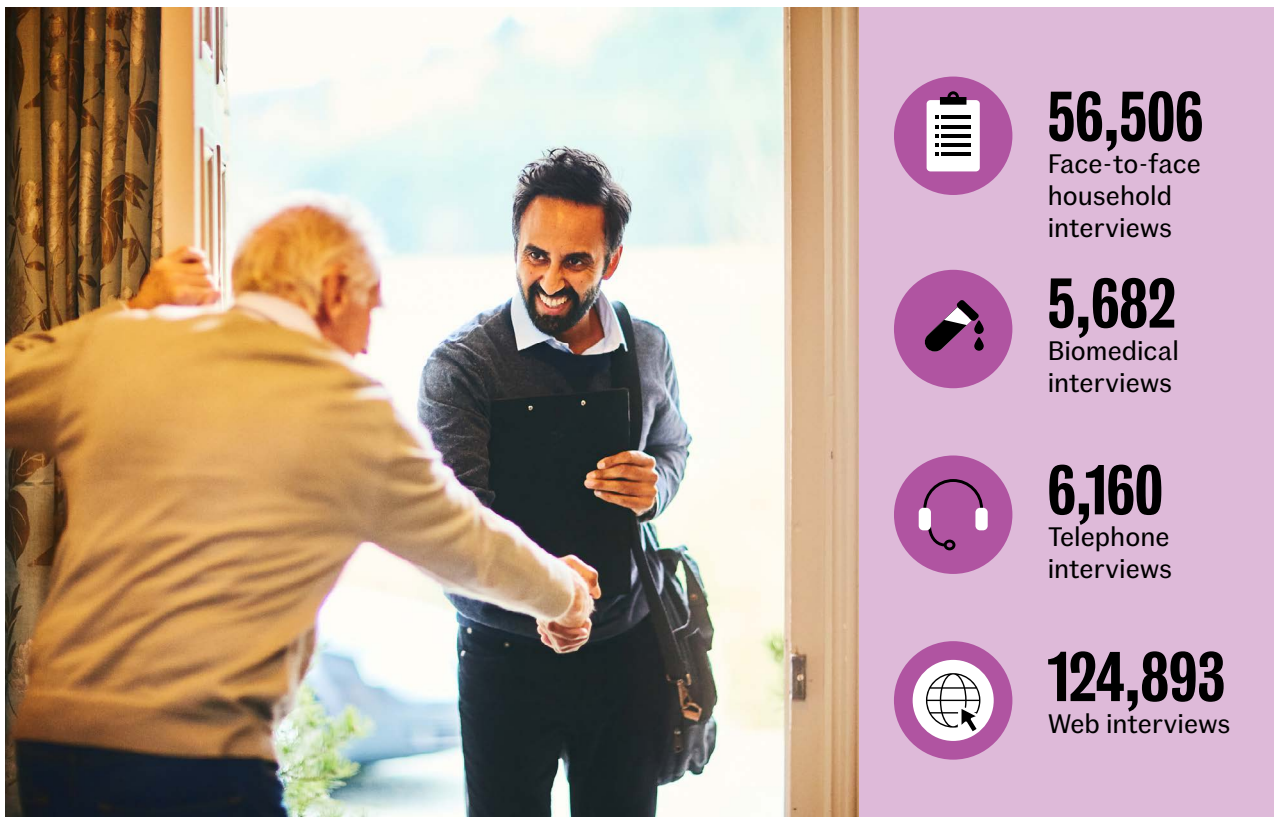
We do this through gathering and presenting evidence – not just to inform decisions, but to spark reflection, open debate, and help make the future as fair, clear and constructive as it can be.



Michael Davis
Chief Executive

Public engagement in our research

Much of our research involves engaging with the public, whether this is via face-to-face interviews in their homes, collecting biomedical samples and measures for our health surveys, and conducting telephone or web interviews. NatCen could not continue without this vital contribution from the public who agree to participate in our research studies and surveys.

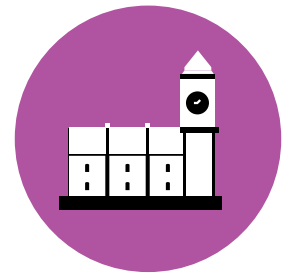


Policy and impact

NatCen is committed to sharing the public's voice with those who have the opportunity and responsibility to inform and change policy to improve society.

Knowing that our research is cited in Parliament and used by government officials and civil servants to inform policy helps demonstrate the impact of our work.

Gaining traction for our work is also achieved via the meetings and events we participate in. We regularly present research findings to government officials, as well as at our own public events, and at external conferences to share our expertise and knowledge across the sector.



99
Parliamentary citations



12
NatCen events



1
Select Committee mention



1,869
Attendees at NatCen events



2
Evidence submitted to Government



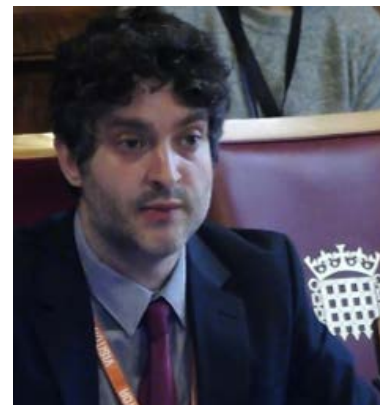
34%
Government officials at NatCen events



57
Meetings with government officials



68
Conference presentations



NatCen researcher presents oral evidence at House of Lords Social Mobility Policy Select Committee

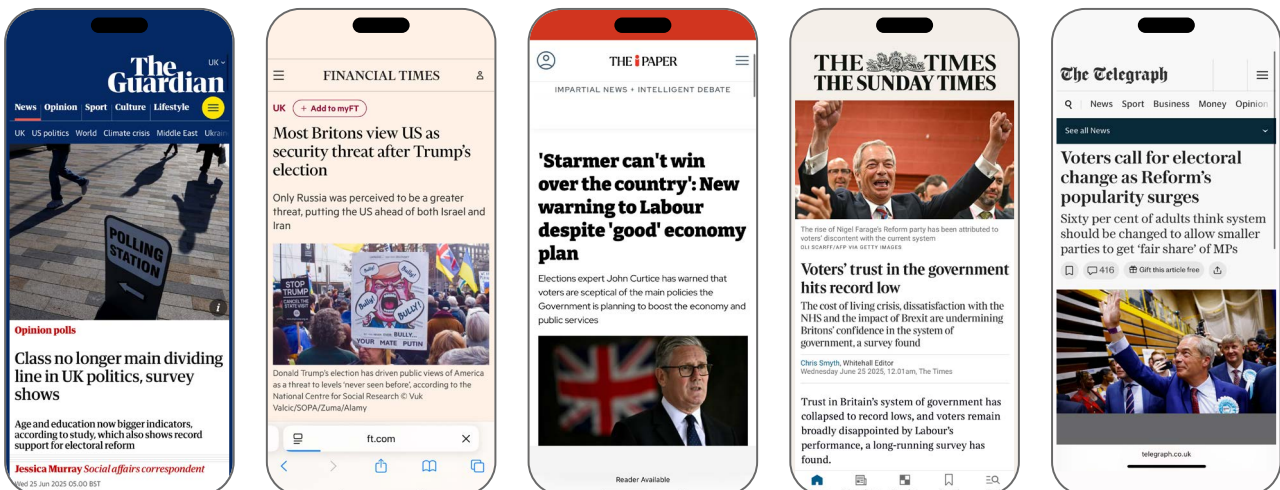
Media engagement

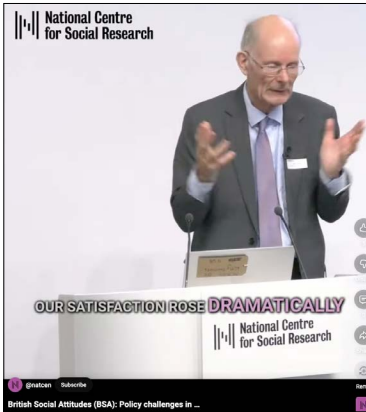
Our charitable objectives focus on the advancement of education through research and the dissemination to the public of such research. One of the most valuable ways to reach the wider public with our research findings is through effective engagement with the media.

In 2024–25, the National Centre for Social Research, the Scottish Centre for Social Research, British Social Attitudes and Scottish Social Attitudes achieved a combined total of 707 mentions in the national print media. Additionally, 851 mentions across broadcast media – television, radio and podcasts – was achieved.

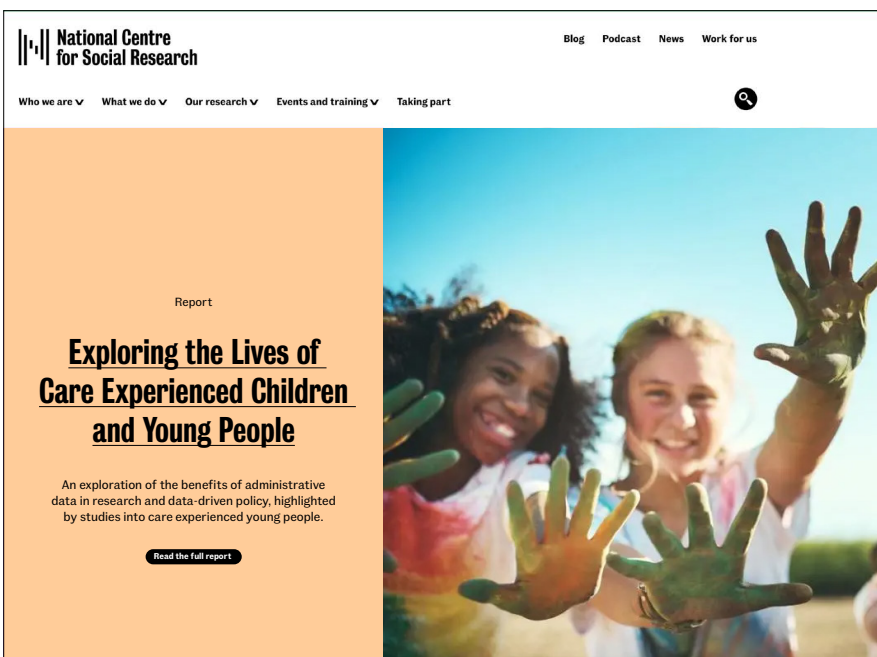
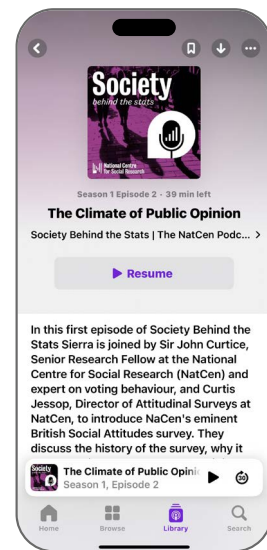
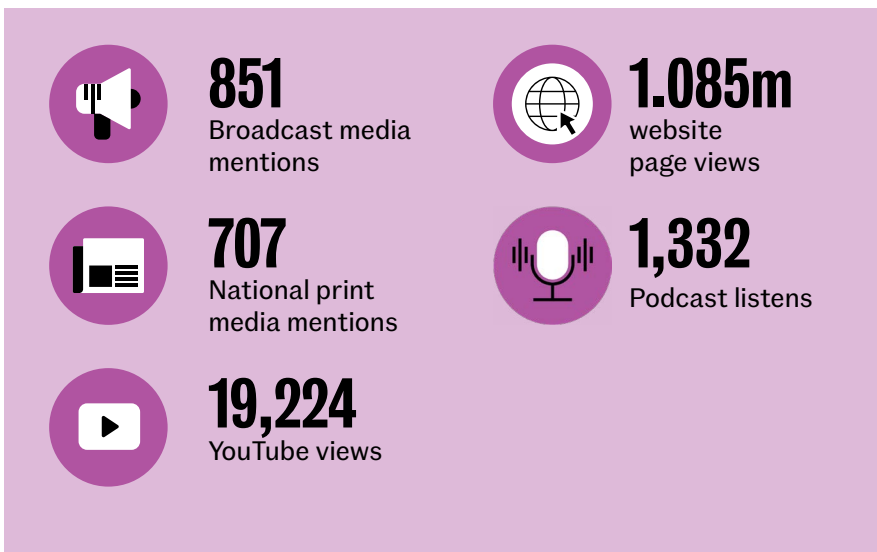
Our video content continues to grow via our YouTube channel, achieving 19,224 views, equally 832 hours of watched content. We have also begun to create YouTube shorts, which have been a great way to edit content from our events and publish as soundbites on key topics.

Since the redevelopment of our website, we have been pleased to see continued growth in visitor numbers and page views. During this reporting period, we passed the one million mark in website page views, increasing our traffic on the previous year by 11%.





Professor Sir John Curtice, Senior Research Fellow, National Centre for Social Research, speaking at British Social Attitudes event. Snippets of his presentation were captured and shared as YouTube shorts.



Building capacity in the sector

NatCen Learning is a provider of high-quality training, facilitation, and high-capacity events, delivering practical insight and skills for social research. We have established a track record for providing flexible and interactive learning support to a range of organisations in the public, academic and third sector to develop their knowledge of key methodological issues and build capabilities in key research skills.

In addition to our annual course programme, we have delivered bespoke and in-house training to Bradford Metropolitan District Council, European Investment Bank, Office for National Statistics, Department for Work and Pensions, Welsh Government, GO Science, West Midlands Combined Authority and Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry.



Gerry Nicolaas, Director of Methods (pictured centre), meets with research teams from the Broadcasting Culture Research Institute in Japan at the European Social Research Association (ESRA) conference 2025, to discuss developing probability-based web panels.



38
Training courses held

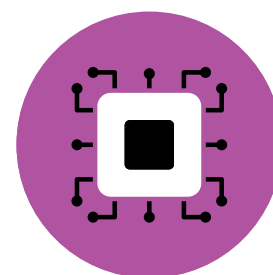


427
Training attendees

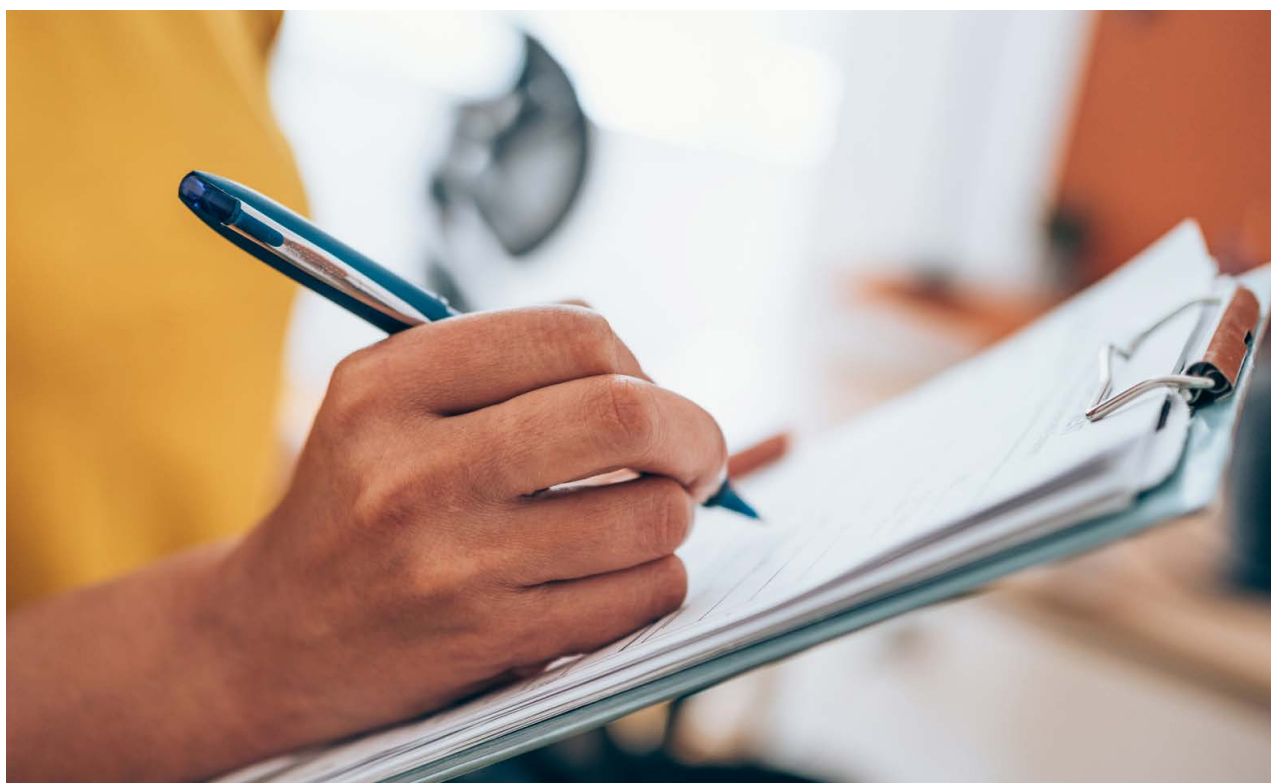


270
Number of training hours delivered

NatCen has developed an AI implementation strategy across its research and operations. Secure access to a NatCen AI Assistant and a strengthened governance framework was rolled out in 2024-25, alongside AI pilots in evidence reviews and proposal writing. Our focus on innovative methods for research using administrative data progressed with a small area estimation project commissioned by the Department for Transport and a pilot on local authority use of administrative data commissioned by ONS.



NatCen is also proud to be one of the co-investigators on the UK Survey Data Collection Methods Collaboration project (also known as Survey Futures). This project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and aims to deliver a step change in survey research, to ensure that it will remain possible in the UK to continue carrying out high quality social surveys of the kinds required to monitor and understand society, and to provide an evidence base for policy. We are leading four of the research strands in this programme and have actively contributed to the published research and thinking on improving survey methods.



Academic impact and research publications

The majority of the research we conduct is reported and published online, either by our clients or on the NatCen website. This provides transparency to the thousands of members of the public we engage with every year.

Some of this work will also influence other sectors, where it will be of specific interest to produce academic papers to journals, or the relevant NatCen research is cited in additional work as part of a wider context.

Papers authored and published by NatCen have been included in the following journals: *Climate Change and Human Health*, *Community Dental Health Journal*, *Community Dentistry and Oral Epidemiology*, *Global Environmental Change Journal* and *QJM: An International Journal of Medicine*.



8
Journal
articles
published



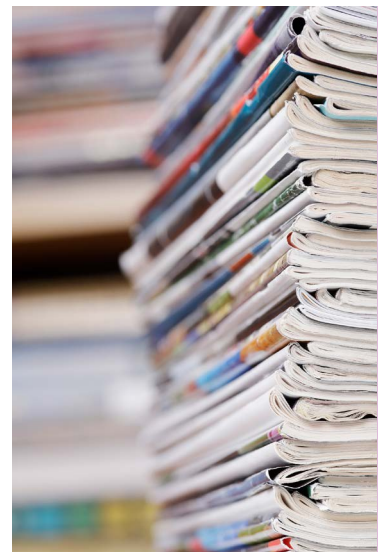
70
Research
reports



46
Academic
citations



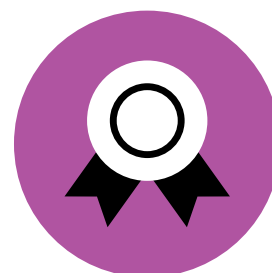
60
Other research
publications



Client satisfaction

Measuring client satisfaction provides valuable insights into how well an organisation is in meeting client expectations, enabling continuous improvement and innovation.

NatCen has a proud heritage in social research and survey methods and our clients value the expertise of our colleagues.



I always feel in safe hands with NatCen in terms of the rigour that goes into the design and analysis

The team was enthusiastic and engaged with our research question. We thoroughly enjoyed working with them

Overall, I found working with the NatCen team a very positive experience and would welcome the opportunity to work with NatCen on our future projects

The project director ensured everything stayed on track. It was a good collaborative relationship. The team were also flexible and helped with a project re-scope early in the project

Case study

BRITISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES

British Social Attitudes: Exploring public opinion and policy challenges amid fragmented politics

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) is NatCen's long-running flagship annual survey of public attitudes and our key tool for informing public debate.

The 42nd British Social Attitudes (BSA) report explored public opinion amidst the ongoing challenges of weak economic growth and struggling public services. We analysed trust in government and politicians since Labour's election win, and the 'health' of Britain's democracy. The research also looked at the impact of social media on political attitudes, as well as public perspectives towards military spending, security and defence amid increasing global political shifts and international conflicts.

Anneliese Dodds MP spoke at our launch event, providing her reflections on this research. Over 400 people joined us, which included representatives from the Cabinet Office and other government departments, Electoral Commission, Electoral Reform Society, Institute for Government, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, National Housing Federation, TaxPayers' Alliance, US Embassy London, and the Wellcome Trust.

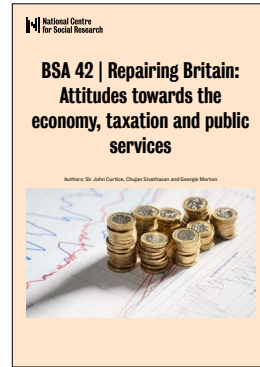
 **6**
reports

 **6**
press releases

 **4**
blogs



Pictured left to right: Sara Rajeswaran (NatCen), Professor Sir John Curtice (NatCen), Alex Scholes (NatCen), Matthew Savill (Royal United Services Institute), Gianfranco Addario (NatCen) and Marta Mezzanica (NatCen) speaking at the British Social Attitudes launch event.



Extensive media coverage of these findings was also achieved, with over 350 mentions in the media, including articles in the Daily Express, Daily Telegraph, Financial Times, The Guardian and The Times.

The BSA survey provides a useful time series of public attitudes and is regularly cited in Parliament. In 2024–25, this resulted in 21 citations, informing debates on decriminalising abortion, the Terminally Ill (End of Life) Bill, education and social care.

BSA in numbers



526

mentions in the national media



754

mentions in the broadcast media



17.5k

downloads



15

videos



13,893

views



407

attendees at launch event



382k

web page views



21

citations in Hansard



31

academic citations



7

podcast episodes



1,332

listens

Case study

Delivering the Government's Devolution Revolution

In December 2024, the UK Government unveiled its plans to decentralise power, publishing the English Devolution White Paper, to support select areas in accelerating their move towards devolution.

We convened a deliberative workshop with residents of Sussex to explore how they wanted their new combined authority to function, and to test a model for how further devolution deliberations could be carried out. Sussex was selected as a case study because it's due to experience some of the biggest changes, going from very low levels of devolved power to the creation of a new combined authority.

A policy briefing paper was published in May 2025, providing insights into the public's attitudes towards devolution. The headline findings from this work were shared in a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's consultation on devolution. The briefing paper was picked up by regional media, the public sector and local policymakers, including councillors from East Sussex. This research also directly fed into a similar project we were commissioned for by Essex County Council as they navigate their own journey towards devolution.

