



Adaptations to a Cohort Study in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Insights from Growing Up in Ireland

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Introduction

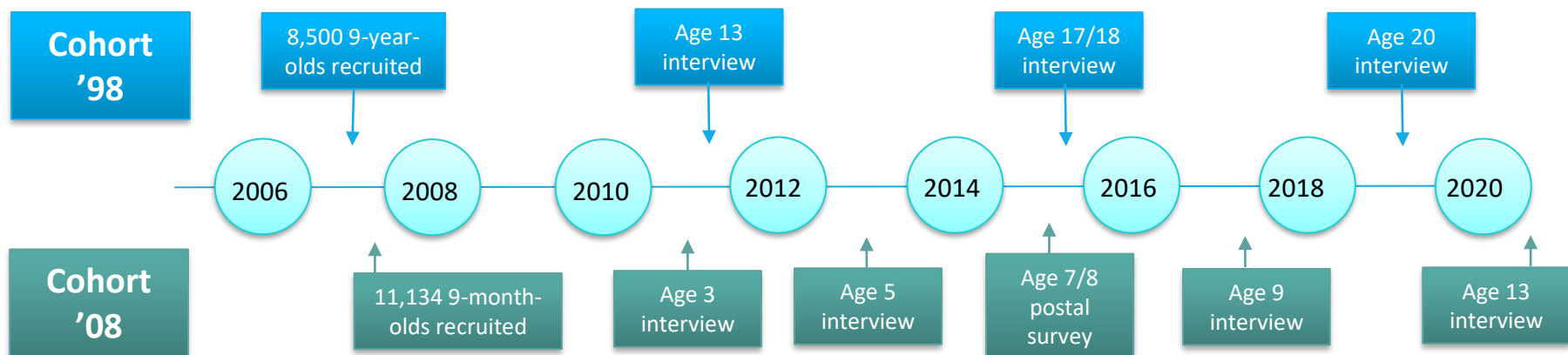
AIM OF GUI?

To improve our understanding of the experiences & development of young people, with a view to informing policy & services

HOW?

Face-to-face (in-home) interviews with two cohorts of young people

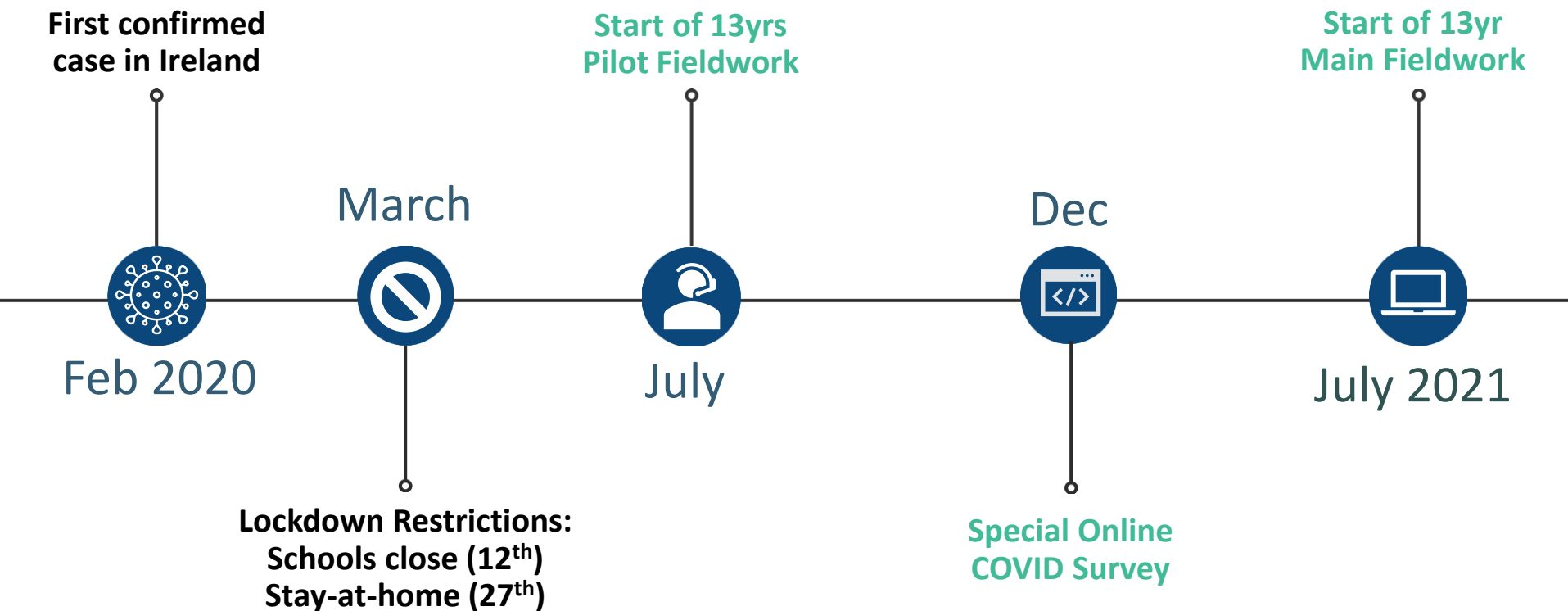
Fig: Timeline of Fieldwork in GUI



Outline of 'normal' fieldwork

- Family receives **advance letter/info pack**
- Interviewer **visits to family home** to arrange interview
 - First contact **always** face-to-face
- **Interviewer administers a questionnaire** in the home
- Participants **self-complete sensitive questionnaire**
- Interviewer takes **physical measurements**
- Young person completes **cognitive tests**
- Visit takes approximately **2-3 hours**

Timeline of pandemic/fieldwork



Two options: POSTPONE or ADAPT?

Adaptations for Pilot

PILOT: test procedures / content for main fieldwork

- **Interview mode changed:** remote (phone/online)
- **Initial contact by phone / email:** consent by phone
- **Reduced questionnaires:**
 - » Focus on new items
 - » Questions added on **pandemic impact**
 - » Survey hosted by CSO
- **Items removed**
- **Changes to logistical procedures**
 - » Interviewer training
 - » No paperwork

Lessons from Pilot / Adaptations for Main

LESSONS FROM PILOT:

- **Participants** gave positive and negative feedback
- **Interviewers** had mixed experience of new modes
 - **Positive:** convenient, quicker, less driving around
 - **Negative:** less personal, lost rapport, consent process, no paperwork

ADAPTATIONS FOR MAIN:

- Retain **remote modes** of data collection
- Families **sent letter/info pack** beforehand
- **Interviewer training** conducted remotely
- Questionnaires needed to be substantially **shortened**
 - But with added COVID-19 items

Adaptations for Main

Shortening questionnaires – consider if...

- there's an **alternative indicator**?
e.g. ask child about smoking habits / bullying, not parent
- it's too **burdensome**?
e.g. Piers-Harris 60-item vs. Rosenberg 10-item scale
- longitudinal **comparability** compromised?
e.g. attendance at religious services
- **not possible** to measure via phone / online
e.g. physical measures, cognitive test, time-use diary

Special COVID Survey

Aim:

- To capture contemporary data on pandemic experience

Methodological Adaptations:

- Web-based survey
- Participants contacted via email/text
- Informed consent/assent received via our website
- Very short questionnaire

Lessons Learned:

- Response rate lower
- Impact of pandemic warrants long-term exploration

Conclusion

- The pandemic determined that adaptations were required to avoid disrupting schedule
- The GUI study team was successful in....
 - adopting **remote modes** of data collection
 - collecting **contemporary data on pandemic experiences**
- Main 13-year fieldwork currently underway – **response rate?**
- Some adaptations are arguably **preferable**
 - Notable environmental/cost-related benefits e.g. interviewer training
- Need to explore the **long-term impact of the pandemic**

Thanks

- GUI Study Team
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