YouGov were employed by the Citizens Assembly team in order to recruit panellists in the target areas (30 in Southampton and 45 in Sheffield) which broadly reflected the demographics of the population. Initially the aim had been to look at several demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, left and right political scale and education but given the time and feasibility restraints we focused on age and gender as a first priority.

Surveys
Approximately a fortnight before the first Assembly a survey was sent out to around 5000 YouGov panellists in South Yorkshire (defined as the four local authorities of Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield) and 5000 panellists in the Solent area (defined as Wiltshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight). The survey asked a series of political questions as well as asking initial interest in attending the weekends.

YouGov uses a process called active sampling, meaning restrictions are put in place to ensure that only the people contacted are allowed to participate. This means that all the respondents who complete YouGov surveys will have been selected by YouGov, from our panel of registered users. The demographics we used to sample the respondents who were sent a survey were shown on the right.

The survey was followed up by further surveys and a telephone call from the team to confirm attendance.

Attendance
In both assemblies approximately 70% of confirmed respondents arrived on the day. In both cases we achieved a good gender balance although there was a noticeable drop off of younger respondents. Another problem was the lack of BAME participants, something that was also noticed by participants at both assemblies.

Future Projects
As part of our work on this project we have made a few recommendations for ways we feel the recruitment process could be improved for future assemblies:

1. **Providing a financial incentive.**
   This would increase the total number of people willing to take part making it easier to recruit participants. In other projects we have also found that harder to reach groups are more responsive to a financial incentive which could also help with representativeness.

2. **Require less commitment**
   Most YouGov focus groups only require participants to attend for a couple of hours. This both reduces the length of participation and inconvenience for participants but also removes the need for an overnight stay which we believe would have had an impact on sign-ups especially for younger respondents.

3. **Oversampling**
   For future projects we would recommend having more flexibility on those who can sign-up in anticipation that some may drop out. This should be possible in both the recruitment stages and in the confirmation stage.

Moreover, the varying drop off rates of different demographics means that, to gain representativeness, it is necessary to oversample certain groups (such as young people or BME groups) in anticipation of a higher dropout rate. If this can’t be achieved solely through online panels, other supplementary recruitment processes could be considered.