

# ESDS Government Newsletter

Welcome to the seventh issue of the new look ESDS Government Newsletter.

## GHS News: Transition to a new longitudinal design

ONS staff updated General Household Survey (GHS) users on major changes to the survey series at the GHS user meeting, organised by ESDS Government, on 22 February. The survey in the field is a panel survey known as the General Household Survey (Longitudinal), or GHS(L). This replaces the familiar cross-sectional survey. With the help of comparable data collection in Northern Ireland, the new GHS(L) will generate UK-wide microdata and indicators on income and living conditions which can then be compared across the European Union under the auspices of The Community's Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC). The EU-SILC is designed to provide better comparability than the European Community Household Panel Study. The content and design is regulated by the European Framework regulation which obligates all EU member states to collect these data from 2004 onwards.

The changes first went into the field in spring 2005, thanks to a derogation which permitted a year's delay to enable the transition. However, only nine months of data was collected in wave 1 of the GHS(L) to enable the survey to move to collection on a calendar year basis (as compared with the financial year as was the case with the old-style GHS).

The survey continues to be a household survey. From 2006, 3,200 new respondents will be surveyed each year and will be re-interviewed 3 further times at yearly intervals (see figure 1). Moving respondents will be followed and members of these respondents' households will be included even if they were not originally sample members.

The new survey should be an excellent source of information on the dynamics of social exclusion. Data innovations include a social and cultural participation section which is asked of all adults and a financial situation section which asks about household debt and the ability to pay bills. Questions on consumer durables have become more focused, and respondents who lack key items will be asked if this is by choice or not. Users of the old 'trailers' should note that these were discontinued at the end of their funding cycle prior to the introduction of the new GHS(L).

At the time of writing, analysis of data from the first wave of the GHS(L) was yet to start. First results might be expected at the end of the year, with microdata being archived in spring 2007. Reporting of the GHS(L) will continue as an electronic document disseminated on the ONS web site. As EU-SILC data was collected by gentleman's agreement from 2003, reports for the EU-SILC predate the GHS(L). For these years, data from the Family Resources Survey have been used to provide best fit estimates.

ONS presentations on the GHS(L) were by Leicha Rickards and Francis Jones. Their presentations can be found in the past events page on the ESDS web site at [www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/past.shtml](http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/past.shtml). Documents relating to the transition to the new GHS(L) can be found on the ESDS web site at [www.esds.ac.uk/government/ghs/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/ghs/).

Figure 1: Illustration of four-year sample rotation

Sample replication	Year 1 (2005)	Year 2 (2006)	Year 3 (2007)	Year 4 (2008)	Year 5 (2009)	Year 6 (2010)	
1	1 <sup>st</sup>						
2	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>					
3	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>				
4	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>			
5		1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>		
6			1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	
7				1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Etc.
8					1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Etc.
9						1 <sup>st</sup>	Etc.

	New sample
	Follow-up sample

Rickards, L. (2005) 'General Household Survey' presentation at the GHS User Group Meeting 22/10/06

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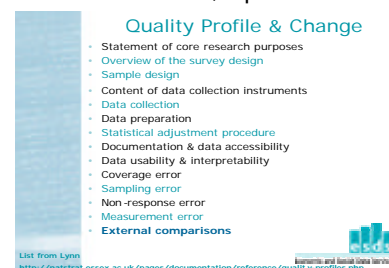
## Integrated Household Survey News

ESDS Government organised a consultation on the new Integrated Household Survey on 31 January. Nikki Bennett from the IHS team at ONS gave users of the government surveys an update on developments with the survey. The survey is still very much in development so the presentation and discussion were based around ONS ideas rather than final decisions. Nikki's slides are available from the ESDS web site at [www.csr.ac.uk/esds/events/2006-01-23/](http://www.csr.ac.uk/esds/events/2006-01-23/).

Key points were:

- the survey aims to achieve interviews with approximately 204,000 households and 450,000 individuals per annum
- there will be a single integrated field of interviewers able to administer all types of interview
- ONS are aiming for fieldwork to begin in January 2008
- the APS(B) will not be included because it has been discontinued. However, the general APS is still included
- the fixed core will probably be for either 5 or 10 years
- the rotating core will probably be annual
- there is a provisional criteria for inclusion in the core (see slides)
- the core questions are not yet decided but a list of potential inclusions for the core is available (see slides). The core will be no longer than 15 minutes
- ONS are trialling 5 different interview types but this may change. The interview will total 90 minutes maximum
- the ONS Methodology Unit are examining the problems of continuity
- there will be a parallel run with the Labour Force Survey at the time of the switch to IHS
- there will be three types of microdata – standard End User Licence data held at the UK Data Archive, Special Licence data held at the UK Data Archive and a dataset for use within the Government Statistical Service
- it is important that ONS provide detailed documentation with the data when it is deposited at the UK Data Archive. There is a particular need to document discontinuity
- a shortlist of topics and funders should be ready at the end of 2006 and by March 2007 there should be agreement on the core and topic content

Further background information on the IHS is available from ESDS at [www.esds.ac.uk/government/cps/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/cps/)



## A report from the ESRC Question Bank

<http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk>

The Question Bank (QB) provides, via the www, a resource for the UK social science community covering issues about professional social survey data collection, social measurement using surveys and information about design of survey questionnaires.

QB aims to play a role in bridging the gap between academics and professional survey agencies.

*Recent survey updates include:*

- British Social Attitudes Survey 2003 (2004 coming soon)
- Family Resources Survey 2002/3, 2003/4
- National Diet and Nutrition Survey 2000

*Recent new surveys on the site:*

- National Adult Learning Survey
- Young Life and Times Survey
- Young People's Social Attitudes Survey

We are in the process of adding more detail to each questionnaire year page so that users can see details of topics and methodology for that particular year, and how it differs from other years in that series.

*Topic updates:*

- We are currently working on linking key variables within topics to associated questionnaires
- More links to other resources, especially ESDS Government
- New topic on Social Capital
- New commentary on Crime Measurement written by Mike Hough

*Search Engine:*

- New improved advanced search
- Search by questionnaire
- Allows you to compare questions across different years

Please address any comments or questions to [qb@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:qb@surrey.ac.uk) or telephone Zoe Tenger on 01483 682788.



## ESRC Survey Link Scheme news

The Survey Link Scheme supported by the Training and Development Board of the ESRC exists to give academic social scientists the opportunity to acquaint themselves with professional social survey research, carried out by the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and various market research companies. It thus provides a bridge between the academic and the practical worlds in which professional survey research is carried out.

The one-day workshop provides a briefing on a particular survey. The day includes an introduction to survey interviewing in the field, an introduction to CAPI and guidance through the CAPI questionnaire of a particular survey by professional staff from the agency carrying out the fieldwork. These workshops are held at various locations throughout the UK.

Remaining 2006 workshops:

- 29 June: Millennium Cohort Study, Bristol University
- 21 July: Family Resources Survey, University of Oxford
- 22 September: Expenditure and Food Survey, University of York
- 20 October: Families and Children Study, University of Manchester
- 23 November: Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey, Queens University, Belfast

For further details of each workshop and for an application form please go to the SLS web site at <http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sls.htm>. Alternatively, contact Jenny Rains at [sls@surrey.ac.uk](mailto:sls@surrey.ac.uk) or telephone/fax 01483 682796.

## More Survey-specific News

### *APS Boost Sample discontinued*

The APS Boost sample (APS(B)) was discontinued by ONS at the end of December 2005. The last dataset containing APS (B) data will be the Jan-Dec 2005 dataset which will hopefully be available later on in 2006. The other data in the APS are unaffected so the APS still continues, just without the APS(B). The APS will continue publishing datasets and NOMIS/NeSS outputs using the English, Welsh and Scottish boosts as well as the Quarterly LFS (Waves 1 and 5) data. The estimates at LA will continue as normal. The main difference to users will be that it will move from two weights to one weight. For more information about the APS go to the [www.esds.ac.uk/government/aps/index.asp](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/aps/index.asp).

### *APS and LFS files available under Special Licence*

'Special licence' data is now available from ESDS for some of the recent QLFS and APS data. Go to [www.data-archive.ac.uk/orderingdata/specialLicence.asp](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/orderingdata/specialLicence.asp) for more information on special licences.

### *EFS food diary data deposited at UKDA: 2002-03 and 2003-04*

To download the updated EFS datasets go to [www.data-archive.ac.uk/findingData/efsTitles.asp](http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/findingData/efsTitles.asp)



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## Using ESDS-supported surveys for sociological analysis

Dr Yaojun Li, University of Birmingham ([y.li.3@bham.ac.uk](mailto:y.li.3@bham.ac.uk))

### *ESDS Government surveys*

The labour market position and socio-political orientation of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups is an area of study with both academic and policy interest. Academically, we can test human capital versus social capital theories on BME occupational attainment. In terms of policy, we can assess the extent to which different policies reduce the 'ethnic penalties'. Owing to the small sample sizes of the minority groups in social surveys, no systematic work is currently available. I am working on an ESRC project with Professor Anthony Heath, University of Oxford, to try to solve this problem. Basically, this involves pooling together all of the General Household Survey, Labour Force Survey, British Election Studies and British Social Attitudes Survey data sets (1971-2004), standardizing key variables, and then conducting the analysis. I will report the findings in due course.

### *ESDS Longitudinal Surveys*

Putnam's influential book (2000) showed that social capital has declined in the US 'across the board', leaving us to wonder whether this is also the case in the UK. Hall (1999) showed, however, that social capital in the UK has not declined but is rising to some extent. Hall's analysis was mainly based on opinion polls. I had an ESRC grant with Professors Andrew Pickles and Mike Savage, University of Manchester, to look at social capital in Britain. Using the Social Mobility Inquiry of 1972 and the British Household Panel Survey (1999), we showed that social capital for the working class was declining beyond reasonable doubt, although there was no solid evidence for a similar decline for the middle class, hence a process of class polarization in social capital (Li, Y., Savage, M. and Pickles, A. (2003) 'Social Capital and Social Exclusion in England and Wales (1972-1999)', *British Journal of Sociology*, 54(4): 497-526). In another paper, we used the item response theory models to construct three dimensions of social capital (neighbourhood attachment, social network and civic participation) and found that, contrary to most speculations in social capital research, civic participation did not lead to significant social trust once the other two dimensions of social capital and people's demographic and socio-cultural attributes are taken into account. (Li, Y., Pickles, A. and Savage, M. (2005) 'Social Capital and Social Trust in Britain', *European Sociological Review*, 21(2): 109-23). This paper is listed in Putnam's website as new development in social capital research: [www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/interestingarticles.htm](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/interestingarticles.htm)

### *ESDS Access and Preservation datasets*

I am also working on a Department of Trade and Industry project with Professor Anna Pollert, London Metropolitan University, to study 'The unorganized worker in the Work Employee Relations Survey 2004: socio-demographic attributes, workplace characteristics and job experience'. I will be able to report the results in September, 2006. In addition, I have been using the Home Office Citizenship Survey (2001) to study 'Expert Citizens' and 'Everyday Makers'. A paper with Professor David Marsh, University of Birmingham, is under review. I have also used this dataset to differentiate the 'machers' and the 'schmoozers' (formal and informal social capitalists as Putnam calls them), and their association with new forms of political participation. A presentation was recently made (23rd April, 2006) at the British Sociological Association and the full paper will be ready in the near future.

I have other papers using the ESDS-supported data and interested readers can visit my web site at [www.sociology.bham.ac.uk/staff/yaojun\\_li.htm](http://www.sociology.bham.ac.uk/staff/yaojun_li.htm)

### *Useful and related ESDS resources*

Social Capital Introductory User Guide: [www.esds.ac.uk/government/resources/themeguides.asp](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/resources/themeguides.asp)

Derived variables that are consistent over time: [www.esds.ac.uk/government/dv/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/dv/)

British Household Panel Survey: [www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/bhps/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/bhps/)

Data Usage (to find out who is working on topics of interest): [www.esds.ac.uk/government/usage/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/usage/)

Would you like to have an article in our next newsletter to report the research you are carrying out using one or more of the ESDS Government surveys? If so, please send an email to [vanessa.higgins@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:vanessa.higgins@manchester.ac.uk).

## Forthcoming events from ESDS Government

Introductory workshop on large-scale government surveys (ethnicity theme), 26 June 2006, University of Surrey

Health surveys user meeting, 5 July 2006, Royal Statistical Society, London

Methodological workshop giving an introduction to analysis over time, 30 October 2006, University of Manchester

Research conference, 7 November 2006, British Academy, London

ESDS introductory workshop, November 2006, University of Bristol

Crime surveys user meeting, 5 December 2006, Royal Statistical Society, London

Labour Force Survey user meeting, Winter 2006, Royal Statistical Society, London

Information about some of these events is available at [www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/](http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/)

## Events held in the past six months

Labour Force Survey user group meeting, 6 December 2005, London

Consultation on the ONS Integrated Household Survey, 23 January 2006, London

Surveys, Social Capital and Social Networks, 31 January 2006, Belfast

General Household Survey user meeting, 22 February 2006, London

Papers from these events are available from our 'past events' pages at <http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/events/past.shtml>

An ESDS paper was also presented at the Scottish Household Survey User Day, 7 March 2006, Edinburgh

A joint presentation on ESDS Government and the Samples of Anonymised Records was made at the Plymouth Mini Methods Research Festival on 27 April 2006

## New and updated resources from ESDS Government

Social Capital teaching dataset (using GHS data)

Extension of work on derived variables over time: ethnicity on the GHS and LFS

List of acronyms commonly used by ESDS Government

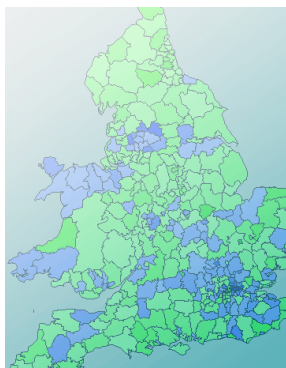
Employment and labour market guide updated and extended

Frequently Asked Questions updated and extended

SPSS guide updated and extended

STATA guide updated and extended

All of these resources are available at [www.esds.ac.uk/government/resources/](http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/resources/)



### Useful links

*List of terms and acronyms*

<http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/acronyms/>

*Join our mailing lists*

<http://www.ccsr.ac.uk/esds/join/>

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