

Major Social & Political Surveys in the UK

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Cross Sectional Surveys

In cross-sectional surveys a new representative sample is selected for each survey.

Annual Population Survey

Commenced: 2005.

Type: Repeated cross-sectional study with randomised sample of 348,699 cases, including a panel element with selected households interviewed annually over four waves.

Main Topics: Household composition and relationships, housing tenure, nationality, ethnicity and residential history, employment location and training, educational background and qualifications.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Integrated Household Survey [Continuous Population Survey]

Commenced: Commenced 2009

The IHS integrates the following surveys:

- Labour Force Survey
- General Lifestyle Survey (formerly General Household Survey)
- Living Costs and Food Survey (formerly Expenditure and Food Survey)
- English Housing Survey
- Life Opportunities Survey
- ONS Opinions Survey (previously the Omnibus Survey)

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Scottish Household Survey

Commenced: 1999.

Type: Repeated cross-sectional study with random sample of 31,000 cases.

Main Topics: Household composition, housing and tenure, health, the vehicles available to the household, occupation and industry of the highest income householder, household income and housing costs, housing change, tenure change, neighbourhood problems, transport and use of public transport, public services, income and employment.

Access: UK Data Archive, <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk>

Labour Force Survey [England, Wales & Scotland]

Commenced: 1979; from 2009 included in Integrated Household Survey.

Type: Repeated quarterly cross-sectional study of 60,000 households.

Main Topics: Household, family structure, basic housing information and demographic details of household members, economic activity, employment status, earnings, education and health.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

British Election Study

Commenced: 1964 as Political Change in Britain; also formerly British General Election Study.

Type: Face-to-face cross-section survey surveys use samples of people 18 years of age or older drawn from the British postcode address file with substantial booster samples for Scotland and Wales. Follow-up conducted one year later.

Main Topics: Electoral issues, party identification and support, party positions on taxation and expenditure, voting intentions and behaviour, attitudes to and opinions of parties and leaders, trust in British institutions, contact with local politicians, attitudes to the European Union, attitudes to the Iraq war; social trust, beliefs and value, social and political attitudes, and demographic characteristics., voting, governance of Britain since the 2005 election, and gathered demographic details such as age, gender and social class.

Access: ESDS, <http://esds.ac.uk/>

British Social Attitudes Survey

Commenced: 1983.

Type: Annual repeated cross-sectional study. Sample size: 4290 cases.

Main Topics: Housing and home ownership, work and unemployment, health and social care, education, business and industry, social security and dependency, tax and spending, the welfare state, transport, environment and the countryside, constitutional reform, law and order; civil liberties, moral issues and sexual mores, racism and sexism, social inequality, religion, politics and governance.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey

Commenced: 1999.

Type: Annual survey of 1,600 randomly selected Scottish adults.

Main Topics: attitudes on a range of social, political, economic and moral issues.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Family Resources Survey

Commenced: 1992.

Type: Continuous survey with an annual target sample size of 24,000 private households

Main Topics: Households circumstances [receipt of Social Security benefits, housing costs, assets and savings, income, eg household grid, accommodation type, tenure, housing costs], individual occupations, income from different sources, pension provision.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Scottish Health Survey

Commenced: 1995.

Type: Repeated cross-sectional study of families and households.

Main Topics: cardiovascular disease and use of services, asthma, accidents, eating habits, physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption, smoking, alcohol consumption, dental health, economic activity, education, parental history, measurements and standard classification questions.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

British Crime Surveys [England & Wales]

Commenced: 1982.

Type: Annual repeated cross-sectional study, with multi-stage stratified random sample of 46,983 non-victim cases and 16,189 victim cases.

Main Topics: Fear of crime, perception of local area, local crime rates, victimisation screener questions, mobile phone theft, experiences of the police, attitudes to the CJS, crime prevention and security, witnessing crime, technology crime, the night-time economy and alcohol disorder; identity fraud, experiences of antisocial behaviour; crime and disorder in town centres and high streets, crime and disorder on public transport, demographic information.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Scottish Crime & Victimization Survey (previously the Scottish Crime Survey, then the Scottish Crime & Victimization Survey)

Commenced: 2004.

Type: Annual repeat cross-sectional survey.

Main Topics: Trends in the level and nature of crime over time, people's experiences of and attitudes on a range of issues related to crime and justice.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

ONS Opinions Survey (previously the Omnibus Survey)

Commenced: 1990

Type: Repeated cross-sectional study: monthly.

Main Topics: Each month's questionnaire consists of two elements: core questions, covering demographic information; a set of non-core questions, that vary from month to month and cover attitudes and opinion in a range of areas, including crime and the legal system, family life and housing, health and disability, smoking and alcohol.

Access: ESDS Government, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/government/surveys>

Longitudinal Surveys

In longitudinal surveys the same panel, or 'cohort', is surveyed over time.

Scottish School Leavers Survey

Commenced: 1991 in current form; previously also part of Scottish Young People's Survey.

Type: Both a cross-sectional and a cohort survey. Members of the cohort are chosen in their fourth year at school, then re-interviewed six months, two years and four years later.

Main Topics: Views on/experiences of school itself, key decisions as to staying on at/leaving school, educational and employment activities after leaving school, business ventures, student debt, background information on parents' level of education and social class, family circumstances and housing tenure.

Access: ESDS, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/>

Understanding Society – the United Kingdom Household Longitudinal Study (incorporates the British Household Panel Survey)

Commenced: 2008.

Type: Longitudinal household panel design study of 100,000 adults and children at 40,000 selected addresses, who are followed up annually, even if they move home.

Main Topics: Survey questions collect information on a range of issues relating to the lives of the sample population: a people's state of health, experiences of crime, personal finances, bringing up children, involvement with local communities, working lives, personal and political views and outlook.

Access: ESDS Longitudinal, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/>

Millennium Cohort Study

Commenced: 2001.

Type: Longitudinal study following 19,000 babies born between 1 September 2000 and 31 August 2001 in England and Wales, and between 22 November 2000 and 11 January 2002 in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Main Topics: Household information, family context, early education, schooling and childcare, child and family activities and child's behaviour, parenting activities, child's health, parent's health, employment, income and education, housing and local area, older siblings' leisure time activities, extra activities at school, classes outside school, home life, health, school, behaviour and perceptions of the local area.

Access: ESDS Longitudinal, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/>

Growing up in Scotland

Commenced: 2005.

Type: Longitudinal study of Scottish children from infancy to their teens, with eight sweeps planned.

Main Topics: Characteristics and circumstances of the children and their families, housing and neighbourhood, eating habits, participation in educational, social and recreational activities, health and development, parenting styles and support, pre-school and school experience, parental health, family and social networks.

Access: ESDS Longitudinal, <http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/>

Scottish Longitudinal Study

Commenced: 2007.

Type: A large-scale linkage study created from a range of administrative and statistical sources in Scotland, including Census and NHS data.

Main Topics: This dataset includes a large sample of the Scottish population and links together various demographic, socio-economic and health data about these individuals.

Access: Scottish Longitudinal Studies Centre, <http://www.lscs.ac.uk/>