Consultation Paper

Proposals for a Continuous Population Survey

Office for National Statistics, July 2004

Contents

1 Introduction

This document sets out a proposed design for the integration of the government household surveys on which the ONS leads into one Continuous Population Survey (CPS). The surveys included for integration are:

- **the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and associated boosts (ALALFS);**
- **the Annual Population Survey (APS);**
- **the General Household Survey (GHS);**
- **the Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS), and;**
- **the Omnibus Survey (OMN).**

While these five surveys have been individually successful, an integrated approach could deliver better value for money and increase the value of statistical outputs.

A comprehensive integration of the entire survey process is proposed; from the creation of a unified field force of interviewers administering a common modular questionnaire to the processing and production of outputs from a single source. As such, the CPS represents a move to a modular household survey system, is part of the ongoing programme of modernisation of the statistical infrastructure of the ONS, and is consistent with the aim of developing a world class framework for social statistics.

The main features of the CPS, including benefits and risks, are further discussed in section 3, and more detailed aspects of survey and questionnaire design in sections 4 and 5. A development programme for the CPS, including a methodological framework for validation of CPS design is set out in section 6.This paper emphasises the consequences for outputs. Further supporting information about existing and proposed survey arrangements are contained in the Annexes.

Decisions about content, quality, and outputs will be the product of comprehensive stakeholder consultation throughout the life of the CPS project. In particular, it is important to emphasise that, only on satisfaction of a range of agreed quality measures, would the CPS proceed to a start date of January 2008.

Comments are invited on the proposal by Friday October 15th 2004. Users may find the questionnaire contained in Annex C useful for structuring their comments. Responses will be summarised and published later this year. Please send comments to:

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2 Background

2.1 Context

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) began informal consultations about an integrated survey with key stakeholders in 2001. At this time, the project was known as the Integrated Social Survey. The ONS Executive Board approved a broad scoping study in 2002, and in 2003 the Board agreed funding for a development project to establish more detailed proposals.

Since then, a further round of informal consultations has taken place with Government Departments, users, and stakeholders. A group with responsibility for steering the project met for the first time in April 2004. These discussions have, in turn, helped to shape the proposals contained in this paper.

2.2 Drivers

At the heart of a proposed Continuous Population Survey is a recognition of the need for National Statistics to produce better information on key social and economic variables between decennial censuses, for a range of policy purposes, and to meet the increasing demand for regional and sub-regional information.

Demand for small area statistics has grown rapidly in the last decade, with particular pressure for information about income and ethnicity, but also other outputs too. The Neighbourhood Statistics project (NeSS) has added to this demand, while the Allsopp Review highlighted the need for improved regional estimates.

There is also increasing demand for a range of new surveys, including those under EU regulations which Member States are obliged to fulfil. And, there is a need to maximise value from ONS' continuous surveys and improve the coherence of National Statistics.

These demands cannot be met within the current survey arrangements.

2.3 Current survey arrangements

Summary information regarding the five surveys to be integrated is provided in Annex D. An on-going programme of harmonisation of questions, concepts, and classifications has improved the coherence of survey outputs in recent years. There is now more consistency between the surveys, although scope for improvement remains.

For example, estimates of the same variables across the different surveys cannot be combined and, despite the use of common questions, small but statistically significant differences occur between those estimates. The existence and maintenance of separate fieldforces, instruments, and processes represents a duplication of effort and sub-optimal use of limited resources.

2.4 Objectives

A Continuous Population Survey would build on and improve standardisation. As a coherent, effective survey system the CPS would include a range of components which could, together, best describe society as a whole and the individuals within it.

Moreover, the ONS believes that only through the combined resource of an integrated survey can the demands for improved reporting at national, regional and local levels be addressed.

The central objectives of the CPS are to:

- **develop a world class modular survey system**, better able to meet the information needs of the 21st century;
- **provide more coherent, better quality information** on which Government, stakeholders and the wider user community can base decisions;
- **increase the precision of most existing statistical outputs** at national, regional and sub-regional levels;
- **create a range of new outputs**, including inter-censal estimates of key socio-demographic variables at the sub-regional level;
- develop **a survey system with the flexibility to accommodate other surveys** at a later stage.

And, to achieve these objectives:

- while **maintaining continuity** of outputs and preserving the integrity of key time series;
- without the need for resource additional to the combined budgets of the five component surveys, and;
- while **delivering further efficiency savings** from economies of scale and increased value of statistical outputs.

To meet these objectives and a deliver a truly world class survey system, an outward facing approach is essential to the success of the CPS. An ongoing, extensive programme of communication and consultation, both nationally and internationally, will inform and shape the development of the project.

In many ways the CPS, like the statistical modernisation programme, is a ‘cutting edge’ development which will assist in placing the ONS at the forefront of statistical best practice world-wide. However, the CPS will also continue to examine and learn from the experiences of other National Statistical Institutes too.

3 A Continuous Population Survey

3.1 Main Features

The proposed form of integration involves a single sample of addresses and a modular survey instrument comprising all the existing topics in order to meet the information needs currently met by the separate surveys.

A short core module providing information on census type socio-demographic variables would be administered to the whole sample, while different topic modules would be administered to parts of the sample. Interview combinations would be composed of both core and selected topic modules. Interviewers in an integrated field force would each be responsible for delivering all the required interview combinations in their area.

3.2 Benefits

There are large potential gains in the precision of many estimates from an integrated survey without additional cost. These result from four factors:

- a very **large annual sample** for core module variables;
- an improved, **'unclustered'** sample design;
- **better representation** at local authority district level, and;
- **improved weighting** methodology.

Even for variables in the LFS, which is already a large and unclustered sample survey, there are significant gains from improved local representation and weighting.

A single modular survey approach also improves coherence by delivering a range of outputs from a single data source. The process of harmonisation is furthered since core module questions will be asked in the same order across all interview combinations and will be, by definition, common across the survey.

The flexibility of the modular design would enable ONS to meet the requirements for new surveys more readily and cost-effectively than at present. It also provides the flexibility to plan topic modules on the basis of sample size for the level of precision required, rather than constrained by whichever existing survey vehicle happened to be available, as at present.

The CPS reduces risks and costs. A fully integrated system would be more reliable, and easier to maintain and update than under current arrangements. Integration would be expected to yield some economies of scale, for example in management overheads, quality assurance, and development costs. More statistical value would be derived from each interview without an increase in compliance costs for the general public.

3.3 Dependencies

The delivery of the CPS is dependent on the development of a common sampling design, a single modular instrument, and a unified field force. However the CPS should also be understood in the wider context of the ongoing modernisation of ONS's statistical and computing infrastructure. The CPS is also dependent on the standard tools and systems that this programme will deliver.

The transition from a complex portfolio of surveys to a streamlined household survey system is illustrated in the diagrams below, where process 1 might represent the organisation and training of interviewers, process 2 the design and administration of questionnaires, and process 3 the editing, imputation and weighting of data etc.

Figure 1 shows an illustration of the extensive system of separate, but related, processes involved in each survey.

Figure 1 : Process model of existing surveys

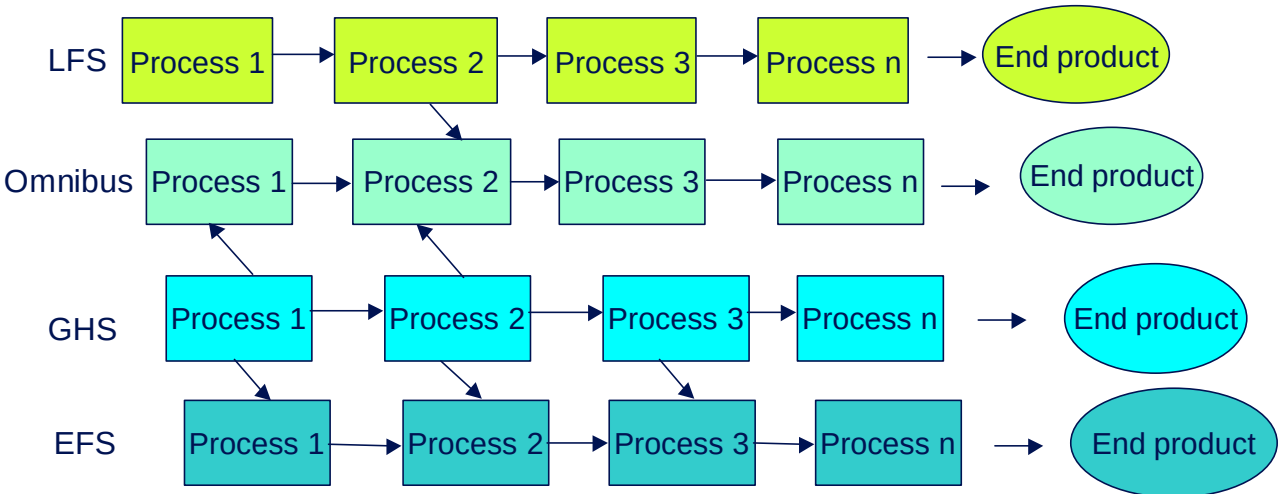
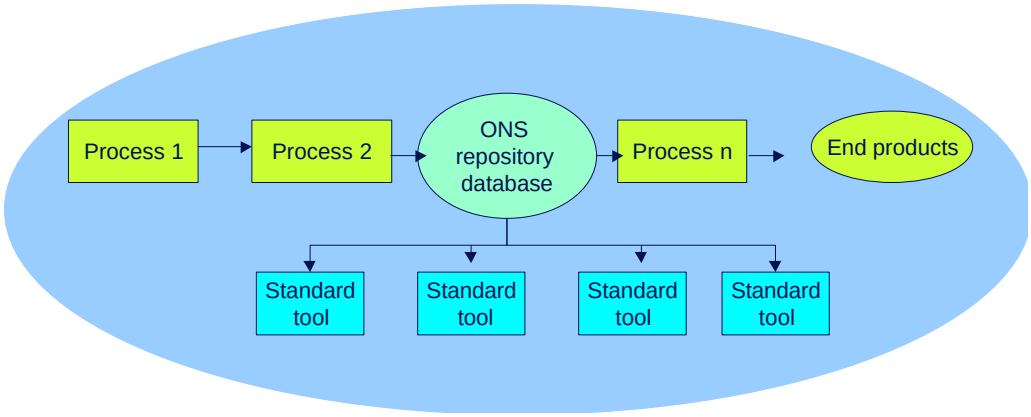


Figure 2 illustrates how the above model could be replaced with a single and efficient production chain. Data are derived from one questionnaire administered by a single field force, and stored in a common repository database (CORD). Editing, imputation and weighting are carried out using common tools to consistent standards. A range of end products are still derived, but from a common source.

Figure 2 : Process model for Continuous Population Survey



The CPS will depend on the delivery of these standard tools and the central database. In addition, it requires the delivery of a new Survey Case Management System (SCMS) to handle the flow of survey information and manage field operations more effectively.

3.4 Risks

There are a number of risks to the development and successful implementation of a Continuous Population Survey.

- Should the CORD or SCMS projects suffer significant delays in delivery, the CPS timetable would be affected.
- It is essential to a cost-effective CPS that each interviewer is responsible for all the interviews in their area, as under the current LFS surveying arrangements. However, the CPS would be different in that all interviewers, including new interviewers, would need to cover a larger range of topics. New e-based learning methodologies and techniques must be devised as part of the programme to develop an integrated field force, and validated in field trials.
- Equally, the proposed new fieldwork design and modular questionnaire would need to be tested in practice to ensure they are acceptable to respondents and interviewers, while also demonstrating that outputs could be delivered within the timescales necessary for required quality.
- Ultimately, any decision to implement the CPS rests on a demonstrable ability to deliver the benefits anticipated while maintaining the integrity of key time series. A large scale experiment will be conducted to run a model CPS alongside the existing surveys and outputs from the two sources published and compared.

Details of a work programme to develop the CPS and manage the risks to it are provided in section 6.

4 Elements of sample and fieldwork design

The CPS sample will, in principle, be composed of the cumulative total of addresses sampled by the existing surveys. A breakdown by survey of the number of achieved interviews in the survey reference year 2003/04 is shown in Table 1 below. On this basis, the CPS would have an annual independent achieved sample of nearly 270 thousand households and more than 500 thousand adults, making it the largest ever continuous survey to be conducted in this country.

Table 1 : Number of households interviewed in 2003/04

	thousands
Labour Force Survey	86.5
Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey Boosts	87.0
Annual Population Survey Boost [1]	66.4
Expenditure and Food Survey	6.4
General Household Survey	8.6
Omnibus Survey[2]	14.0
All	**268.9**

1 Estimated 2 Currently one selected adult per household

Data are collected under separate arrangements in Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). ONS will continue to work in partnership with NISRA to enable delivery of as wide a range of UK outputs as possible.

All outputs derived from the core module will benefit from gains in precision associated with the new, larger sample. In comparison with the current LFS family of outputs these gains will be modest; in comparison with outputs derived from the other surveys they will be very large indeed.

The CPS will use the Small User Postcode Address File to sample individuals living in private households and a small number of communal establishments, as at present. However, the CPS could readily accommodate improved sampling frames or designs for expanding establishment coverage, should the need arise.

4.2 Sample structure

The CPS will adopt an unclustered design, similar to that used by the LFS in Great Britain.

Currently, all other Government household surveys use clustered designs, where addresses in a sample are selected from particular areas grouped in small ‘clusters’. Traditionally, this was necessary for all but the very largest surveys for reasons of economy. Clustering reduces interviewer travel time and costs, and makes fieldwork practical and affordable. However, a clustered sample leads to less reliable estimates.

By combining all the survey samples and fieldwork into one overall design the CPS, for the first time, will deliver unclustered samples for all interview combinations. An unclustered design would leads to substantial precision gains for many of the outputs currently produced from the GHS, EFS and Omnibus surveys.

4.3 Fieldwork Design

The fieldwork design for the LFS involves the division of Great Britain into approximately 200 ‘Interviewer Areas’. These form the basis for the planning and allocation of field work.

The CPS would build on this model, utilising the larger pool of interviewers created by a unified fieldforce to create more than twice as many Interviewer Areas. Being relatively smaller, these areas reduce the amount of interviewer travelling-time and help maximise response.

By designing these areas to coincide with local authority areas, the CPS also ensures more consistent local coverage, as well as improved estimates for core and labour market-type outputs at the Local Authority District level.

5 Modular design, content and outputs

The CPS questionnaire will be designed as a single modular survey instrument comprising:

- a **core module** administered to the whole sample providing information on key variables for all CPS households and persons;
- **topic modules** administered to parts of the sample providing information on variables for which sufficient precision to meet policy needs can be obtained from a portion of the CPS sample;
- a small number of viable **interview combinations** formed from combining core with selected topic modules so that all topic modules are covered.

The CPS will involve design of the new core module and a re-examination of the combinations of topic modules represented by the current surveys, with the aim of improving coherence in reporting and optimising the use of modules.

Decisions on the exact content of the core module and the restructuring of topic modules will be discussed and agreed in light of the consultation process. **Comments and views on these issues are particularly welcome, structured around the user consultation questionnaire (Annex C).**

5.1 Core module

Core module questions would collect information on census-type variables and other key socio-demographic and labour market variables. Some possible question topics for inclusion in the core module are included in Annex A.

The core questionnaire needs to be relatively short and straightforward so that total interview length for core and topic modules remains viable. Indeed, it is essential to the success of the CPS that the core questionnaire does not become unduly burdensome. Questions that are eventually included in the CPS core are likely to meet all or some of the following criteria:

- a classificatory variable essential for analysis
- an output for which there is a clear requirement for a high level of precision nationally or regionally, and not provided elsewhere
- an output for which there is a clear requirement for reporting at a sub-regional level, for example to local authority or health authority district level, and not provided elsewhere
- question(s) that can be administered by either face-to-face or telephone interviewing, and for which proxy responses are acceptable
- question(s) which would not adversely affect response to the CPS as a whole

There would be advantages to fixing key core questions over a number of years to provide an uninterrupted time series to a high level of precision. However, continuous reporting is not essential for all outputs. To allow greater flexibility and scope for inclusion of a wider range of questions, it would be desirable to include some questions periodically. Therefore, it is proposed to sub-divide the core module into two modules:

- A **fixed core module** with questions normally included for at least a 5 year period, or longer

- A small **rotating core module** with questions normally included once every 3 years. For example, where a question might be asked in 2008, 2011 and so on.

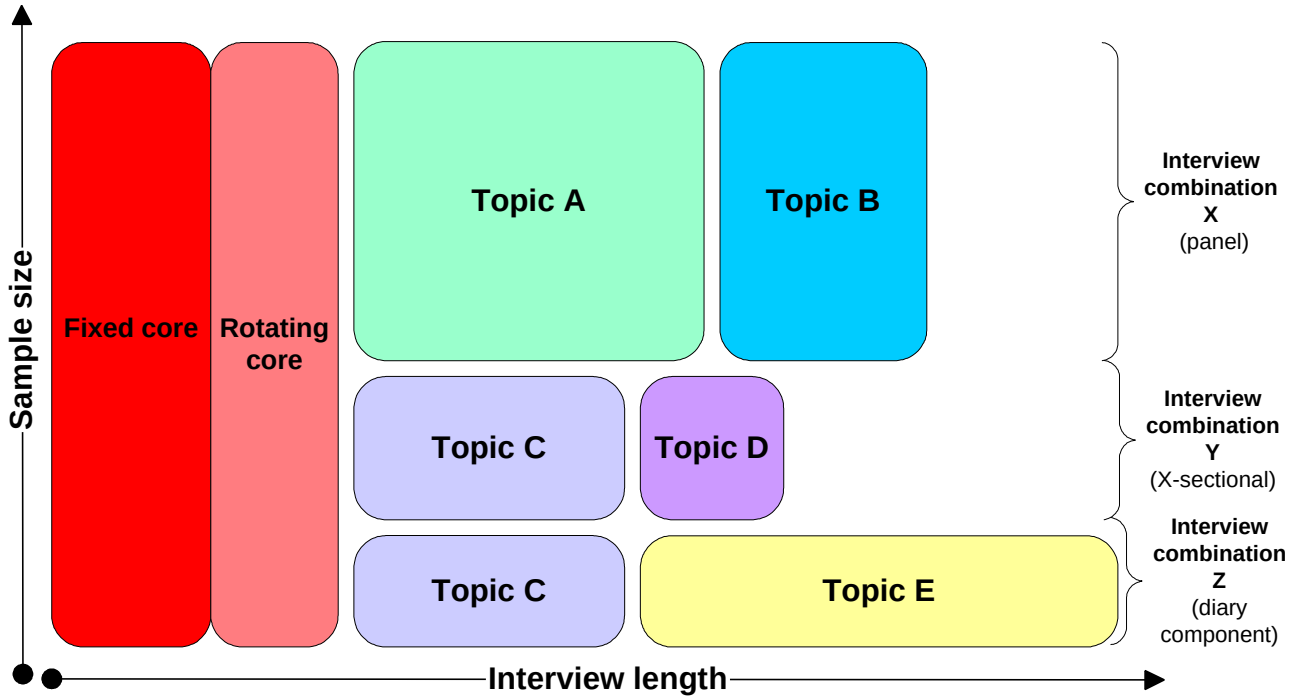
5.2 Topic modules

Questions in topic modules will collect detailed information on the various subjects covered by the existing surveys where a continuing need for this information is identified. For example, health, education, labour market, income, and expenditure.

It is possible to run some modules across more than one interview combination to generate a sufficient sample size. It would also be possible to use the core questionnaire to identify rare or hard-to-find groups so that additional questions could be administered, or respondents followed-up at a later stage. A modular design would enable the quicker and more effective introduction of new modules, and amendment of existing modules, as customer output requirements change.

Figure 3 below depicts an abstract representation of how core and topic modules could be combined across the CPS as a whole to form possible interview combinations.

Figure 3: Abstract representation of a modular survey instrument



A detailed Illustrative diagram of a modular CPS questionnaire is contained in Annex B.

5.3 Survey procedures

The CPS will be a mixed-mode data collection instrument. Where an interviewer records an initial non-response, households may be 're-issued' to an alternative interview mode for a further attempt to secure an interview where appropriate. For example, a field interview may be re-issued to the telephone unit where a telephone number can be obtained, or a telephone interview re-issued to a field interviewer.

An integrated field force, combined with new data handling systems will improve the flexibility and speed with which re-issuing of interviews between modes can occur. An efficient and systematic approach to mixed mode interviewing will help maximise response.

Different topic modules may have different rules for the use of personal, telephone or self-interview, as with the current surveys. However, it is proposed that all questions in the core module should be suitable for both personal and telephone interviewing modes. Therefore, at a minimum, in the event of interview non-response in the field, the core module could be re-issued to the telephone unit.

Similarly, where possible, the CPS will seek to improve consistency in rules governing permissibility of proxy responses (i.e. information provided by an interviewed person on behalf of another person).

In addition, electronic questionnaires could be redesigned to provide:

- a **standardised** approach to asking questions. dependent on a respondent's answer from a previous interview (known as 'dependent interviewing');
- improved **flexibility** to allow individuals in a household to be interviewed consecutively, concurrently, or in combinations of both ('concurrent interviewing');
- **intelligent questionnaires** capable of recognising the mode of interview and adapting accordingly, and;
- more extensive use of **context sensitive help** to resolve interviewer and respondent queries as they arise

Any changes in questionnaire design will be thoroughly tested and validated as part of the development programme set out in section 6.

5.4 Outputs

It will be possible to use CPS core and topic outputs separately or in combination to paint accessible and comprehensive pictures of society in general, and to explore specific topics in detail. The CPS will provide a rich dataset and developing a CPS dissemination strategy will be an important process, with internet utilisation at the centre of providing new look outputs. Significant improvements in the timeliness of reporting some outputs should also be possible.

The CPS will continue to produce the full range of outputs currently delivered by the existing household surveys, from monthly Omnibus outputs to annual labour market outputs. The CPS will build in on-going developments, for example the current program to investigate using the APS to produce annual labour market outputs on a quarterly basis.

In addition, the CPS will be able to report for the first time on new topics contained in the core module on a quarterly basis. The production of annual reports of all core

data, on a rolling quarterly cycle would also be possible, as would in time a range of longitudinal outputs.

A proposed new weighting methodology would involve using variables from the core sample to supplement information available from population estimates. For example, a core module output, such as employment status, available for the whole sample could be used to weight detailed Labour Market outputs available for only part of the sample. The weighting strategy would have three aims: to increase the precision of estimates, to reduce non-response bias, and to ensure that outputs from the core and topic modules conform to common population totals.

Starting in January 2008, the CPS will be based around calendar years. The existing surveys will complete a transition from financial to calendar years prior to the inception of the CPS. However, the modular design of the survey allows for greater flexibility. For example, while any changes to the core module would be implemented annually, changes to particular topic modules could be made at other points of the survey cycle. Moreover, with the majority of questions in the core module fixed over a number of years, it would be possible to take slices of outputs based on calendar, financial or other time schedules.

6 Next steps

6.1 Quality and risk management

The ONS believes that, in principle, the arguments for developing an integrated survey are compelling. Nevertheless, the final decision to proceed with the CPS will only be taken after satisfaction of a range of agreed quality measures and success criteria. In particular, the CPS will not proceed at the risk of unacceptable discontinuity to the integrity of key time series.

Risk management will, therefore, be an integral part of the project. The transition from five separate surveys to one survey will be planned so as to deliver change incrementally, setting in place the necessary foundations for the CPS while delivering benefits in their own right.

For example, the integrated field force will be delivered in two phases, the first in 2005 and the second in 2007. New data handling systems will be introduced and 'bedded down' well in advance of the new survey. While necessary for the CPS, these changes will help to maximise response on the existing surveys prior to their integration, and would minimise risks at the point of implementation.

Various types of quality review will be conducted during the project. Briefly these include product testing, document reviews, assessment of outcomes and user acceptance. They will also include continuing formal and informal national and international consultation.

6.2 Development programme

Maintaining the integrity of time series data is an essential aspect of CPS development. A detailed programme of work undertaken throughout the project will measure and monitor the impact of proposed changes on key series and target indicators. All aspects of the new survey's design including sample, instrument and fieldwork design will be thoroughly tested and validated

Work is presently ongoing on a range of methodological issues concerning question development and data collection. Combinations of qualitative and quantitative techniques are being employed to investigate new questions, relating to income and education for example, and to asses output quality and comparability.

A range of issues has been identified for investigation, including item and unit non-response, mode of data collection, collection of proxy responses, order effects, and questionnaire flow. In each area, the nature of change will be established, and its effect understood and minimised.

A series of trials will test, develop, and validate all aspects of the proposed survey. These will start with a small scale feasibility test involving a few hundred interviews, and culminate in a 'parallel run' involving many thousands. This trial will be central in taking the decision to go ahead with a CPS and discontinue the component surveys. For the CPS to proceed in January 2008 this decision can be taken no later than April 2007.

The CPS development programme is summarised in table 2 below.

Table 2: CPS Development Program

Date	*Event*	*Description*
October 2004	First formal consultation period ends	Subsequent collation and publication of summarised responses on ONS web site.
Spring 2005	First feasibility trial	Small sized field trials first using experienced interviewers, then interviewers of mixed ability. Designed to test and then retest questionnaire, training strategy and some field procedures
Summer 2005	Second feasibility trial	
Late 2005	Pilot	Trial testing the above issues but on a larger scale, incorporating all field procedures and some new IM systems. Some outputs produced including response rates.
Mid 2006	Parallel run	Large scale trial of model CPS testing all elements of the new survey from end to end. Run in parallel alongside existing surveys, and with sufficient sample size to produce comparable estimates for key time series.
January to March 2007	Second consultation period	Publication of benchmarked outputs from the dress rehearsal and further formal consultation period.
April 2007	**Decision**	**Key decision point regarding CPS go ahead.** If decision taken, final implementation work to December 2007 follows.
January 2008	Start date	Planned start date for CPS.

6.3 An evolving survey system

As well as developing an appropriate design for the planned 2008 launch, the new survey is being built with future change in mind. The expectation is that new modules will be added as policy needs change over time, and that requirements for some new surveys will be met through the CPS. In addition, sponsors of other surveys may opt to switch their existing continuous surveys to this vehicle. Each survey joining the CPS would contribute to the overall sample size and further boost the precision and analytical power of the survey data.

Therefore, an essential element of CPS development is to 'future-proof' the survey. The sample structure will be designed so that wholesale changes will not be required, even if sample size requirements alter substantially. The modular structure of the survey instrument will readily accommodate new topics, while a range of survey types and features can be incorporated within the CPS survey system. For example:

- interview combinations with cross-sectional, quarterly or annual panel designs
- diary components and other self-completion elements
- telephone or personal interviewing
- interviews with all household members or with individuals sub-sampled within a household, or combinations of both

Hence, the data collection method chosen for each topic module or interview combination can be based on statistical requirements rather than the constraints of a particular survey vehicle.

A successful CPS could also play an important role in the wider development of ONS statistics. The integrated survey will provide a valuable source of input data which could be used for small area estimation. And, while the advent of a CPS might represent a major advance in survey taking in the UK it could, itself, be just one component of a much wider Integrated Population Statistics System (IPSS).

By combining integrated survey data with census and administrative data, the IPSS would create a single comprehensive population statistics database. Linked at the individual level and regularly updated, the database would underpin all ONS population and social statistics. Looking beyond the next decade, this might ultimately remove the need for a decennial census altogether.

More details about the proposed IPSS, together with web links to other related documents, are contained in Annex E.

Annex A: Topics for a CPS core questionnaire

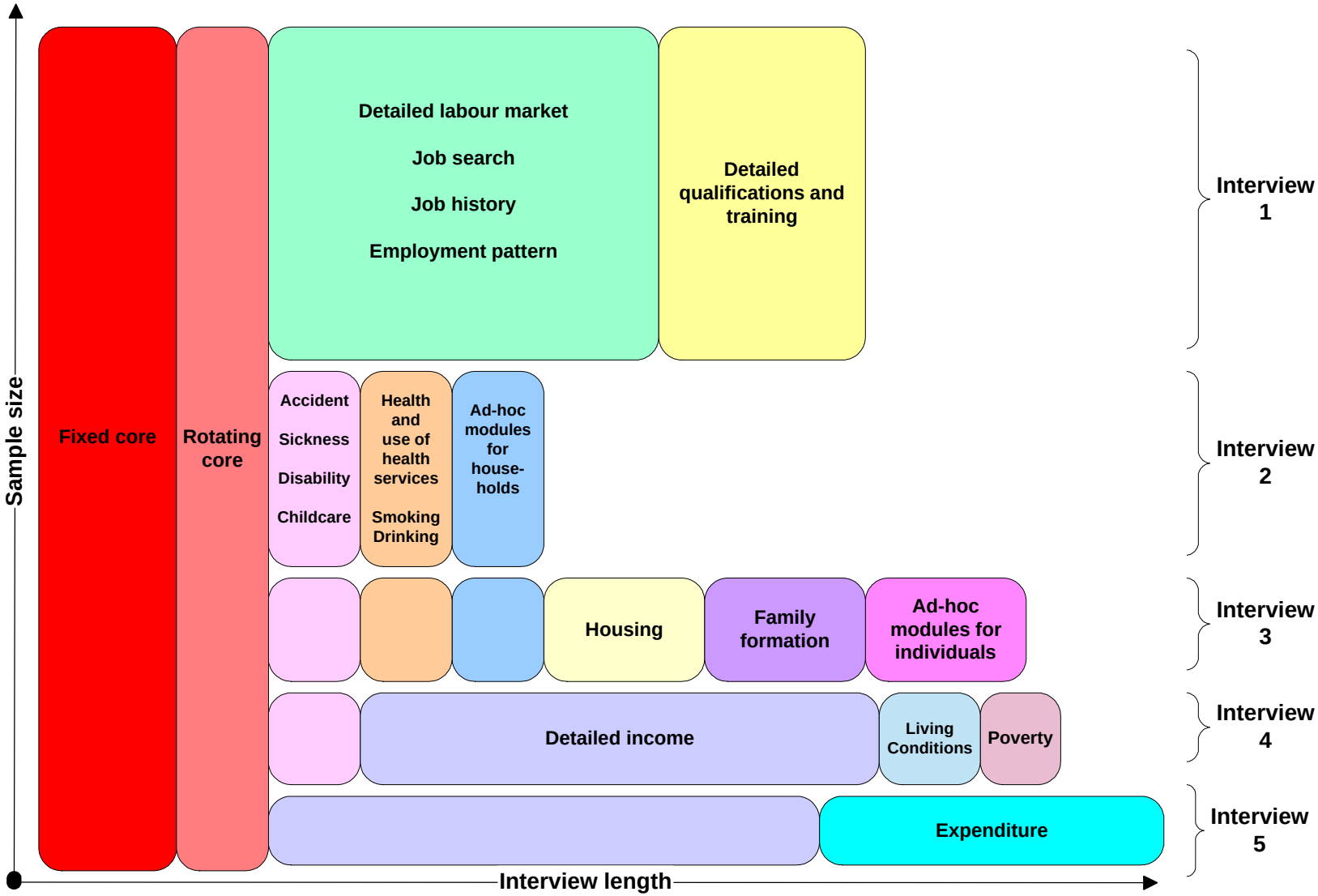
Below is a list of potential topics for inclusion in the CPS core question module. For information it also sets out whether the output will be available from the current Annual Population Survey (the forerunner of the CPS core questionnaire) or is already available from the 2001 Census.

Final decisions on the content of all CPS modules will only be taken after consultation. **Comments on these suggestions, and views on inclusion in either the fixed or rotating core modules are invited.** Comments on definitions of outputs are also welcome.

Topics and outputs	Included on APS	Included on Census 2001
People and places		
Gender, age, marital status	✓	✓
Living arrangements e.g. living with partner	✓	✓
Household type and composition e.g. lone parent household with dependent children	✓	✓
Family unit	✓	✓
Usual place of residence	✓	✓
Residence one year ago	✓	✓
Identity		
Ethnic group	✓	✓
Country of birth	✓	✓
Year of entry to UK	✓	✓
Religion	✓	✓
National identity	✓	X
Nationality	✓	X
Health		
Limiting long-term illness	X	✓
General health	X	✓
Provision of unpaid care	X	✓
Prevalence of smoking	X	X
Housing		
Tenure	✓	✓
Accommodation type	✓	✓
Household size	✓	✓

Employment		
Employment status (International Labour Organisation)	✓	✓
Full-time or part-time employment	✓	✓
Industry of employment	✓	✓
Occupational group	✓	✓
Length of time since last did paid work	✓	✓
Whether looking for paid work	✓	✓
Attendance on government training schemes	✓	✓
Place of work	✓	✓
Education		
Educational status (whether student)	✓	✓
Age finished full time education	✓	X
Highest qualification level	✓	✓
Other		
Banded household income (equivalised quintile groups)	X	X
Social Class (NS Socio-Economic Classification)	✓	✓
Internet access	X	X
Ownership of consumer durables	X	X
Access to transport (car or van)	✓	✓

Annex B: Illustrative diagram of a modular CPS questionnaire



Notes

Interview 1 represents an LFS type interview combination. It preserves the quarterly and annual panel designs within the current LFS arrangements.

Interview 2 builds on an APS interview combination. By combining the APS sample in parts of England with elements of samples from other interview combinations it may be possible to produce representative outputs for Great Britain as a whole. Again, the annual panel element of the APS is preserved.

Interview combinations 3 and 4 represent a range of outputs currently collected by the GHS and Omnibus surveys, and, in future by the prospective Survey of Income and Living Conditions. It is particularly difficult to foresee the development paths of these surveys over the next few years. Plans will need to be adapted accordingly as these become clearer. In this model, interview type 3 is cross-sectional, while interview 4 is based on a annual panel design.

Interview type 5 represents an EFS type interview, cross-sectional and with a diary component.

Annex C: User consultation questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to help users and stakeholders structure their responses to the consultation document. It is intended more as a prompt to ensure that all aspects are covered across the consultation as a whole, rather than as a formal questionnaire to be answered in its entirety by each respondent. If you would find it easier to structure your response in another way please do so. However, to enable ONS to best understand your particular needs, comprehensive answers to section A in particular are required.

A. Use of current outputs

1. Which statistical topics from the five CPS component surveys do you use? (e.g. unemployment, provision of informal care, internet access)

For each of those used:

2. From which survey(s) does this information derive?
(e.g. smoking prevalence from the GHS, economic activity from the LFS)

3. Which sources provide you with information? For example, do you use published outputs such as *Living in Britain*, on-line statistics systems such as *NeSS* or *Nomis,* or microdata.

4. If you use microdata, which topics do you analyse together from the same microdata set? (e.g. smoking and measures of general health from the GHS)

5. Are you interested in measures of level, measures of change, or both?

6. How regularly do you report on this topic? (e.g. every year, every 3 years, one or two months a year)

7. What level of geographic dissagregation do you use for analytic purposes?

8. For what purposes do you use these statistics? For example,

- monitoring performance and measuring targets
- resource allocation
- service planning
- policy formulation
- directly in your own analysis and research
- for background to your own analysis and research
- provision of information/ research services

9. If your purposes include targets, which specific targets do you measure?

10. How far does the range of outputs in the existing surveys meet your needs for this topic, and if there are gaps, which of these should be filled and why?

B. The CPS and future outputs

11. Demand for topic inclusion on the core module will be strong. However, to retain a viable interview length, the capacity for inclusion of topics will be tightly restricted. A list of potential topics for inclusion in the CPS core module is included in Annex A and list of criteria in section 5.1. With this in mind, which topics do you think should be included in the core module? Specifically, which of these are:

- suitable for inclusion in the fixed core module, and why?
- suitable for inclusion in the rotating core module, and why?
- not suitable for the core module, and why?

12. Are there any other topics that should be included and if so, why?
If more than one topic please rank in order of priority.

13. The arrangement of modules in the CPS questionnaire will determine which variables can be analysed in combination. For example, core variables collected from the whole sample can be analysed with all other variables in the survey. However, only those part sample topic variables collected on the same interview combination will be linked together. Beyond your responses to question 4;

- which topics do you think it is essential be linked together on the same interview combination, and why?

14. Is the existing time scale for release of survey outputs acceptable? If not, what are the priorities for improving timeliness on the CPS.

15. How do you view the trade-off between maintenance of consistent time series and improvements in methodology and design?

16. Which time series are most critical to you, and why? If more than one, please rank in order of priority.

17. How do you view the trade-off between increased precision and reduced sample size? For example, under CPS arrangements, it may be possible to reduce the sample size for particular interview combinations and still maintain or improve on current levels of precision.

C Overall assessment

18. What do you see as the main strengths and the main opportunities provided by the CPS?

19. What do you see as the main weaknesses and the main threats posed by the CPS?

20. What should the top priorities be for addressing and resolving these weaknesses and threats?

21. Over the next five to ten years what do you see as the major developments in user demand for statistics from the CPS which ONS will need to respond to?

22. An essential element of CPS development is to 'future-proof' the survey so as to readily accommodate additional modules and surveys in future, if the need arises. Are there any aspects of the proposed CPS design that you think might inhibit this? How could the CPS design be improved to avoid this?

23. Are there any other issues relating to the CPS which you would like to comment on in the context of this consultation?

D Personal Details

24. Please make sure to include details about yourself including your name, organisation, position and contact details.

25. Co-ordinated responses across departments or organisations are particularly welcome. Please ensure you have included details of colleagues that were consulted within your department or organisation.

Thank you for your input to this consultation.

Please send your comments to:

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Annex D: Surveys for integration: The LFS, APS, GHS, EFS and Omnibus survey

The General Household Survey (GHS), the first multi-purpose household survey, started in 1971 and covers a wide range of social and socio-economic topics. The main aim of the survey is to collect data on core topics including housing, employment, education, health and family information.

The Expenditure and Food Survey (EFS) started in 2001 bringing together two surveys, the Family Expenditure Survey (FES) and National Food Survey (NFS), that were both well established and important sources of information, charting changes and patterns in Britain's spending and food consumption since the 1950s.

A Labour Force Survey (LFS) has been carried out in the UK since 1973 and in its present form since Spring 1992, providing a wide range of data on labour-market statistics and related topics such as training, qualifications, income and disability. In recent years the quarterly LFS has been supplemented by a series of annual boost samples in first England, then Wales and Scotland, known collectively as the Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey (ALALFS).

The Annual Population Survey (APS) is a boost sample in England which, when combined with results from the Labour Force Survey and LFS boost samples, will provide better local authority district estimates for key social and socio-economic variables than is possible from existing survey sources. The APS started in January 2004.

The National Statistics Omnibus Survey (OMN) is a regular, multi-purpose survey that started up in 1990 in order to provide quick answers to questions of immediate interest and information on topics that do not require a full, in-depth survey.

All the surveys attempt to conduct interviews with every household member, with the exception of the Omnibus survey where interviews are administered to one randomly selected household member only. The surveys differ in their use of Computer Assisted Personal and Telephone Interview (CAPI and CATI) and the extent to which proxy responses are permitted.

The table below summarises some of the main features of the current surveys.

Table 3. Current data collection features of the five component surveys

	CATI [Computer Assisted Personal Interview]	CAPI [Computer Assisted Telephone Interview]	Diary	Proportion of proxy responses	Who interviewed?	Panel component?
EFS	✓	✗	✓	14%	All >16	✗
GHS	✓	✓	✗	5%	All >16	✗ [2]
LFS	✓	✓	✗	32%	All >16 [1]	✓
APS	✓	✓	✗	45%	All >16	✓
OMN	✓	✓	✗	N/A	Selected adult	✗

[1]Economically inactive respondents over the age of 70 are not interviewed in waves two to five of the quarterly LFS, other than to check their economic status is unchanged.
[2]The GHS may incorporate a panel component from 2006.

More information about these surveys can be found via the following links.

Labour Force Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Source.asp?vlnk=358&More=Y#general

Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/article.asp?ID=370&Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=416

Annual Population Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/APS_links.pdf

Expenditure and Food Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/surveys/expenditure_food_survey.asp

General Household Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Source.asp?vlnk=263&More=Y

National Statistics Omnibus Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/services/SurveyOmnibus.asp

Annex E: Links to other documents

Proposals for the Continuous Population Survey
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=9668&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=272

Neighbourhood Statistics Service (NeSS)
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

ONS Modernisation
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about_ns/BusinessPlan/Business_Plan_2001-04/modernising.asp

Integrated Population Statistics System
http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_population/ipss.pdf

Allsopp Review
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/consultations_and_legislation/allsop_review/consult_allsopp_index.cfm