

## ANNUAL POPULATION SURVEY

1. There is a need for National Statistics to provide better information on key social and socio-economic variables between decennial censuses for a range of policy purposes. This paper provides an update on the Annual Population Survey (APS) and its links with proposals for an integrated social survey, being taken forward by ONS.
2. January 2004 marks the start of a new survey of approximately 65,000 achieved household interviews a year. When combined with results from the Labour Force Survey and English Local Labour Force Survey, the survey will provide enhanced annual data for England covering a target sample of at least 500 economically active persons for each Unitary Authority/Local Authority District and at least 450 economically active persons in Greater London Boroughs<sup>1</sup>, where these targets are not already met by the LFS and sample boosts in England, Wales and Scotland.
3. The aim is to provide better quality data on key social and socio-economic variables such as housing, employment, ethnicity, education and health, particularly at a local level. This will improve inter-censal monitoring of key variables for a range of policy purposes and provide local area information as part of the Neighbourhood Statistics Programme (NeSS).
4. The survey will focus on key Census-type topics which are also included in the existing LFS (see appendix A). It will not include all topics covered by the LFS and boosts, resulting in a shorter average interview length and, we expect, higher levels of response.
5. The plan is to provide a single annual local area database, including the interviews from the new survey, to replace the existing local area LFS database. Various cuts of the dataset will then be produced from the 'master' database to meet different customer requirements, as under current arrangements. The inclusion of the new interviews in the annual local area database will enable ONS to provide enhanced local area information on the NS website and to LMS users via NOMIS. These data will also be included as part of the Annual Local Area Labour Force Survey (ALALFS) publication. As now, special tables will be available from the ONS-LFS Sub-Regional Table Service. Databases with a reduced set of variables and/or geographical restrictions will also be made available to departments on request, subject to approval by the ONS Microdata Release Panel.
6. For non LMS-specific topics, such as housing tenure, household size, household type, marital status, minority ethnic group, religion and motor vehicles, ONS will provide annual LAD/UA results from the master database, as appropriate<sup>2</sup>, for dissemination via the NeSS website. Details and mechanisms have yet to be agreed with colleagues in Data Acquisitions, ONS.
7. The proposal is for the first new annual local area database to cover the period January-December 2004 and for subsequent annual databases to apply to calendar years. This fits in with the switch to calendar quarter databases for the main LFS already announced, from January 2005. It is hoped that the first new annual database and results for the Neighbourhood Statistics website will be available in June 2005.
8. Methodology, ONS will devise the weighting methodology for the new annual local area database. The aim is to improve the weighting for LMS by using additional information to supplement the control totals available from administrative sources. The additional information will comprise population estimates from

common variables from the combined sample (LFS, boosts and APS); these estimates will be used as control totals for estimating variables which are only in the LFS and boosts. The methodology is described in NS (03) 4 *Integrated Social Survey: weighting approaches and gains in precision* which is available on the NS website at [http://nswebcopy/methods\\_quality/downloads/NSMAC\(03\)4.pdf](http://nswebcopy/methods_quality/downloads/NSMAC(03)4.pdf). The methodology will be thoroughly tested and the effects of improved estimates on time series discussed with users.

## 9. Timetable

Survey and questionnaire design	March 2003
Pilot	July 2003
Dress rehearsal	October 2003
Fieldwork yr 1 starts	January 2004
Weighting methodology	September 2004
Combined LFS/APS dataset for Jan-Dec 2004 available	June 2005

<sup>1</sup> In Wales and Scotland, existing boosts to the LFS have a target sample in most areas of 875 economically active persons in each UA. There are no plans to increase these targets as part of the 'NeSS Survey' due to concerns about saturation sampling in these areas.

<sup>2</sup> subject to guidance on publishable thresholds.

## Links with the Integrated Social Survey

10. The APS provides an excellent opportunity for us to start working towards an integrated social survey. The APS questionnaire will form the basis of the ISS whole sample (core) module. In addition, for the ISS, we plan to add questions on household income, general health and longstanding illness to the core module, and possibly also the provision of unpaid care.

11. Many interviewers will be trained to work on the APS and this will be the start of a phased approach to integration of LFS and GFF fieldforces in terms of recruitment, training and management over the next few years. Associated work is already underway to standardise working practices and develop more effective personnel management systems including interviewer appraisal, all developments that set the scene for a fully integrated fieldforce.

12. A paper outlining proposals for the Integrated Social Survey was sent to departmental HOPs by Karen Dunnell in April 2002. This was followed up with informal meetings with key departments over the summer and a paper to the LMS Central Government Users Group in September 2002. Information about the ISS proposals were also posted on the NS website [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/downloads/Paper\\_ISS\\_V2.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ssd/downloads/Paper_ISS_V2.pdf).

13. Proposals for a more integrated approach to survey taking within ONS are at an early stage. There has been no decision that the ISS should definitely go ahead and there will be none unless, among other requirements, the National Statistician is satisfied that the LFS will not suffer. ONS has the utmost concern to preserve and improve on the quality of the LFS. Development plans for the ISS will need to include extensive

testing to check that existing outputs will not suffer. It is now likely that January 2007 will be the earliest possible start date for data collection on the ISS (subject to approval).

14. If the ONS Executive approves the project, more intensive communication and consultation activities with customers and users will begin. One of the first steps will be to publish a project plan and timetable, including consultation arrangements and timetable. There will need to be extensive consultation at an early stage about the content of the 'whole-sample' (core) module of questions, the content of individual modules and how modules should be combined to make up viable interviews to be carried out in the field. The actual number of interview combinations and their content has yet to be determined (subject to extensive consultation). There may be as many as 8 or 9, depending on requirements. One of the objectives of the ISS is to form interview combinations which reduce the burden on respondents.

15. Assuming we move from the scoping stage to development stage, customers will be asked to provide information about their existing data needs, e.g. required sample size, precision, need for information from the same microdata, policy uses etc.

ONS

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## **Appendix A: Topics covered by the NeSS Survey**

## Input variables

### *Demographic information*

Gender

Age

Marital status

Living arrangements

Length of residence

Where living 12 months ago

### *Household composition and type*

Household composition

relationship to HRP and all other members of the household

### *Ethnic group, national identity, religion, country of birth*

ethnic origin

national identity

religion

country of birth

## Example categories/indicators

harmonised categories: male; female;  
(all persons)

harmonised categories  
employment related analyses: 0-15; 16-19; 20-24; 25-49; 50+;  
working age (16-59/64);  
retirement age (60+/65+);

other analyses: agreed harmonised  
aggregations of age (5 or 10 year bands)  
harmonised categories: married and  
living with spouse; separated; (all  
married);

single; divorced; widowed;  
(all not married);

harmonised categories: married;  
cohabiting; (person living in a couple)  
single; separated; divorced; widowed;  
(person not living in a couple)

less than 12 months; 12 months, less  
than 2 years; 2 yrs, less than 3 years; 3  
years, less than 5 years; 5 years, less  
than 10 years; 10 years or more  
outside the UK; elsewhere in the UK;  
baby born in last 12 months

Various household and family  
groupings: e.g. lone parent household,  
cohabiting couple without children,  
pensioner couple household

spouse; cohabitee; son/daughter; etc..  
from which various household and  
family type variables can be derived

harmonised categories: White; Mixed;  
Asian or Asian British; Black or Black  
British; Chinese; Other ethnic group  
harmonised categories: English;  
Scottish; Welsh; Irish; British; Other;  
Not Stated

% Christian, % Muslim, % no religion  
as per LFS

*Tenure*

tenure

harmonised categories: own outright; buying with mortgage or loan; rented from council etc..

*Industry, occupation, economic status, employment details and social classifications*

economic status

harmonised categories for economic status; employment rate, ILO unemployment rate, inactivity rate, activity rate, economically active (000s), employed (000s), unemployed (000s), employees; self-employed full-time; part-time

employment status

full-time/part-time (self-assessed)

length of time since last did paid work (not in employment)

harmonised categories: less than 3 months; 3 months, less than 6 months, 6 months & less than 1 year etc..

occupation

industry

NS socio-economic classification

SOC

SIC

harmonised categories

*Education*

highest qualification level

no qualifications; other qualifications; level 1 equivalent; level 2 equivalent; level 3 equivalent; level 4 equivalent and above

educational status

full-time student; not full-time student

*Other*

household motor vehicles

no motor vehicles; one vehicle, two vehicles, 3 or more vehicles