

# Data in the spotlight

UK and cross-national surveys



# Overview

The UK Data Service

Survey Data

Documentation and Tips

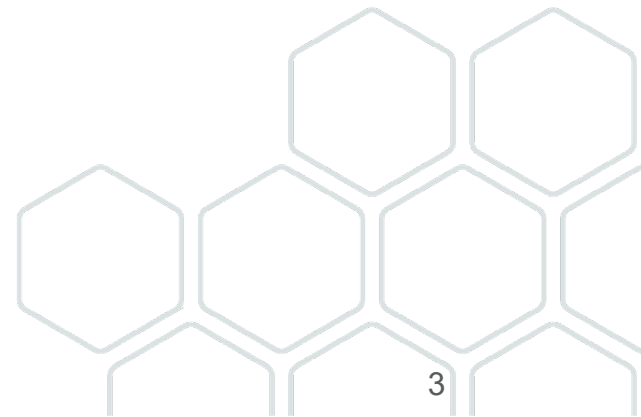
Website Tour

If you have questions put in the Q&A box and we will answer later



# What is the UK Data Service?

- A comprehensive resource funded by the ESRC
- A single point of access to a wide range of secondary social science data
- Support, training and guidance



# What data do we hold?



# UK surveys

## Data about individuals or households

- Commissioned by Government departments
- Conducted by organisations such as the ONS, National Centre for Social Research

## Datasets include key characteristics with large sample sizes





Nationally-representative

Repeated cross-sections







Same (or similar) questionnaire with a new sample of people every time, often repeated regularly



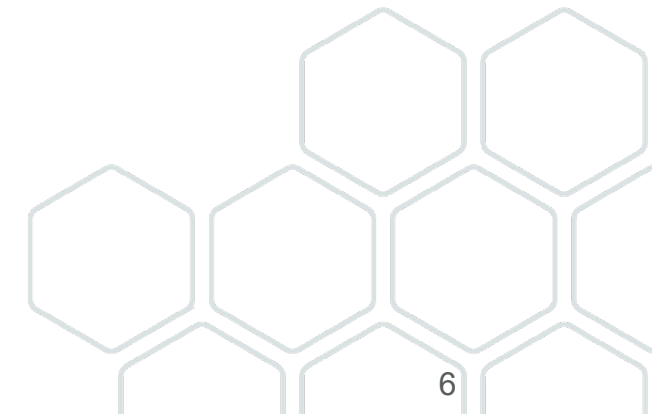
# Survey microdata

	 QHealthr	 RSEX	 AGEXr	 Martstat3r	 HighEd4r	 Ethnicity2r
1	2	2	2	2.00	2	1
2	2	1	3	1.00	2	1
3	2	1	3	1.00	4	2
4	3	2	5	1.00	4	1
5	1	2	3	3.00	2	1
6	2	2	1	2.00	2	1

**each column**  
Variables containing information collect by the survey

	 QHealthr	 RSEX	 AGEXr	 Martstat3r	 HighEd4r	 Ethnicity2r
1	Good	Female	25 to 44	Single	Below degree...	White
2	Good	Male	45 to 54	Married/Cohabitin...	Below degree...	White
3	Good	Male	45 to 54	Married/Cohabitin...	None	Other
4	Fair	Female	65 to 74	Married/Cohabitin...	None	White
5	Very good	Female	45 to 54	Married/Cohabitin...	Below degree...	White

**example**  
Row 1 = Female, aged 25-44.



# Accessing microdata

## Download

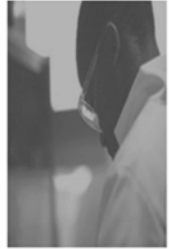
- Whole datasets (and documentation)
- Different formats: SPSS, STATA and Tab

## Online via Nesstar

- Browse variables and metadata
- Simple data analysis
- Export tables and graphs
- Download subsets of data



# Key topics



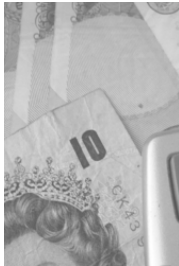
## Employment and work

- Labour Force Survey
- Annual Population Survey
- European Working Conditions Survey



## Health

- Health Survey for England
- Scottish Health Survey
- Diet and Nutrition surveys



## Family Finances

- Family Resources Survey
- Living Costs and Food Survey



## Crime

- Crime Survey for England and Wales
- Scottish Crime and Justice Survey



## Attitudes and opinions

- British Social Attitudes Survey
- NI Life and Times Survey
- Eurobarometer
- European and World Values Surveys



## Housing and the local environment

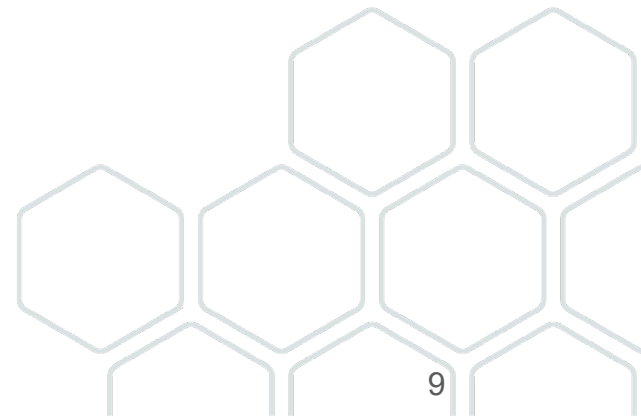
- English Housing Survey
- Living in Wales





# Which of these variables do you think we hold?

- Total daily expenditure for 2 weeks
- Surveyor report on properties
- Blood samples
- Number of sexual partners
- Covid-19 test results



# Types of information collected in UK surveys

## The Living Costs and Foods Survey

- expenditure and food including 2-week food diary

## The English Housing Survey

- a surveyors report on housing conditions

## Health Survey for England

- a nurse visit to a sub-sample of participants includes both a blood and saliva test as well as taking height and weight measurements

## The National Survey for Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles

- asks detailed questions about sexual experiences, behaviours, and views

## Understanding Society (Covid waves)

- test results, vaccination, infection, social and employment changes arising from Covid

# Survey examples

# British Social Attitudes Survey

- Public attitudes
- Patterns of continuity and change
- Most years since 1983
- Sample ~3,000
- Core questions (asked most years)
  - Including background and classificatory questions
- Modules on social, economic, political and moral issues
  - some asked regularly, others less often



# Poll: Gender equality

## Attitudes to gender roles

Support for a traditional division of gender roles has declined over time, though substantial support remains for women having the primary caring role when children are young.



Image adapted from the BSA 2012 report 'British Social Attitudes 30, published by NatCen  
[http://bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report.pdf)

# Gender equality

## Attitudes to gender roles

Support for a traditional division of gender roles has declined over time, though substantial support remains for women having the primary caring role when children are young.



Image adapted from the BSA 2012 report 'British Social Attitudes 30, published by NatCen  
[http://bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30\\_full\\_report.pdf](http://bsa-30.natcen.ac.uk/media/37580/bsa30_full_report.pdf)

# Labour Force Survey

ONS survey – main source of data in the labour market

- Measures employment, unemployment and economic activity
- Plus related topics - occupation, training, hours of work and personal characteristics of household members aged 16 years and over

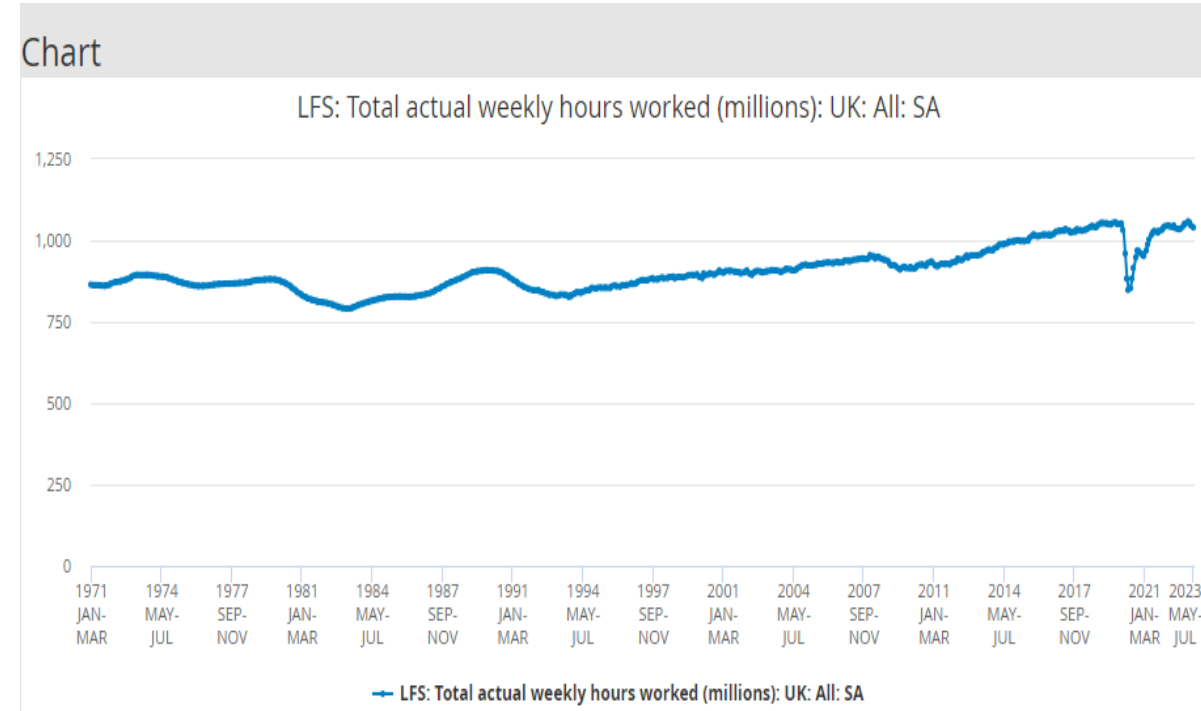
Quarterly Labour Force Survey, 1992-

- ~60,000 interviewed per quarter

## Datasets

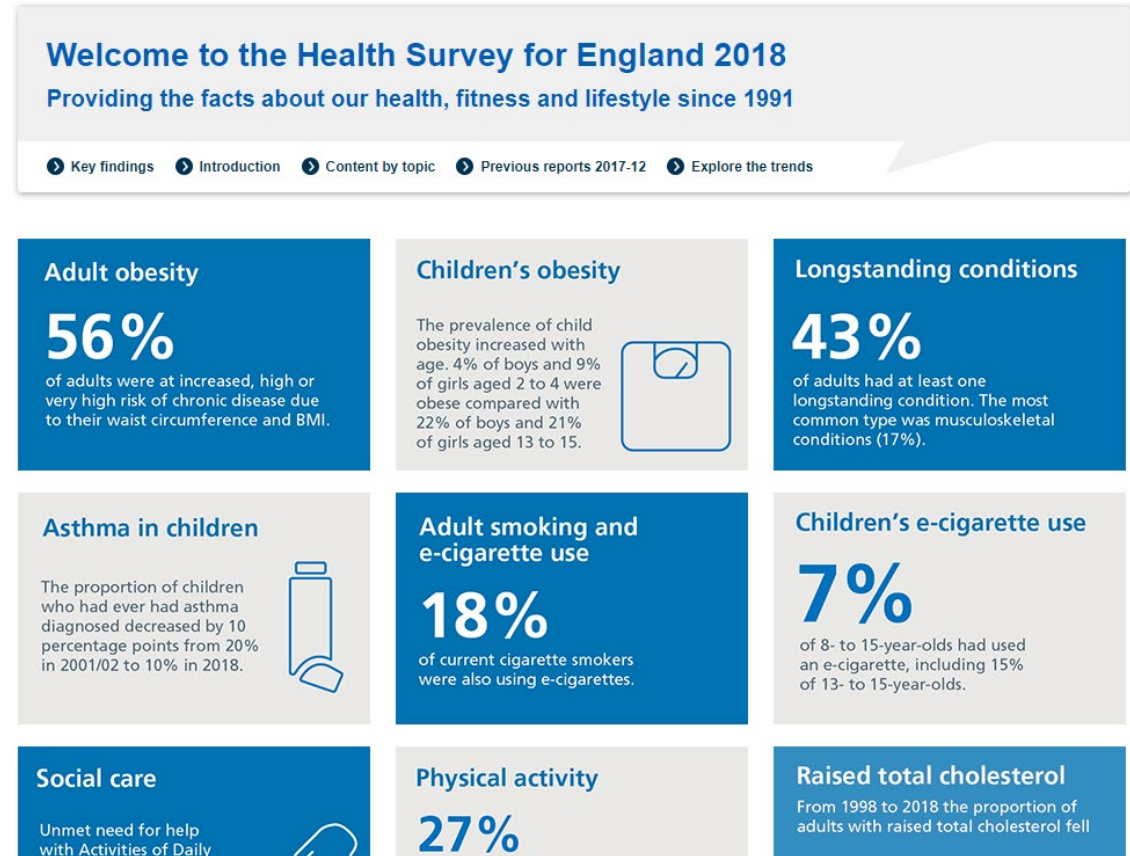
- Quarterly: individual and household
- Longitudinal datasets (linking quarters)

## Chart



# Health Survey for England

- General health, longstanding illness, smoking and alcohol
- Core questionnaire plus focus topic for the year
- Annual survey, run since 1991
- Currently ~13,000 interviews a year
- Questionnaire with physical measurements and the analysis of blood sample
- [Reports](#)





# Survey documentation

Understanding the survey

# Understanding Society documentation

## Key documents

- user guide summarises design, sampling, derived variables, using weights, funding, how to link to main survey and details of special access datasets
- questionnaires for each wave
- data dictionary
- participant information

Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020-2021

Details	Documentation	Resources	Access data
<b>Documentation</b>			
Title	File name	Size (MB)	
UK Data Archive Citation File for Study 8644	<a href="#">UKDA_Study_8644_Information.htm</a>	0	
UK Data Archive Data Dictionaries	<a href="#">ukda_data_dictionaries.zip</a>	1.47	
UK Data Archive ReadMe File for Study 8644	<a href="#">read8644.htm</a>	0	
Understanding Society COVID-19 Study: April 2020 Questionnaire	<a href="#">8644_ukhls_covid19_apr20_questionnaire_v6.0.pdf</a>	40.37	
Understanding Society COVID-19 Study: Changes to Data Previously Deposited with UK Data Service	<a href="#">8644_ukhls_covid19_data_changes_v8.0.pdf</a>	7.38	

# Understanding Society questionnaire

- questions asked
- variable name
- routing information  
(conditions on whether question is asked)
- time and date stamps for start and completion

*The example asks about long Covid symptoms.*

## lgcvsymp [Long covid symptoms]

**Universe:** IF ff\_hadsymp = 1 AND hadsymp is not 1 AND longcovid = 2 AND (ff\_country is not 2 OR (ff\_country = 2 AND welsh is not 1)) // Ask if previously reported having covid symptoms, and not reported having symptoms in current survey, and has not returned to previous health, and respondent not living in Wales, or living in Wales and did not complete survey in Welsh.

**Source:** UKHLS covid-19 survey

**Scripting notes:** For compatibility with 'symptoms' for current covid, category numbering is not in order – please follow order below.

**Text:** Which of the following symptoms do you have?

*Please select all that apply.*

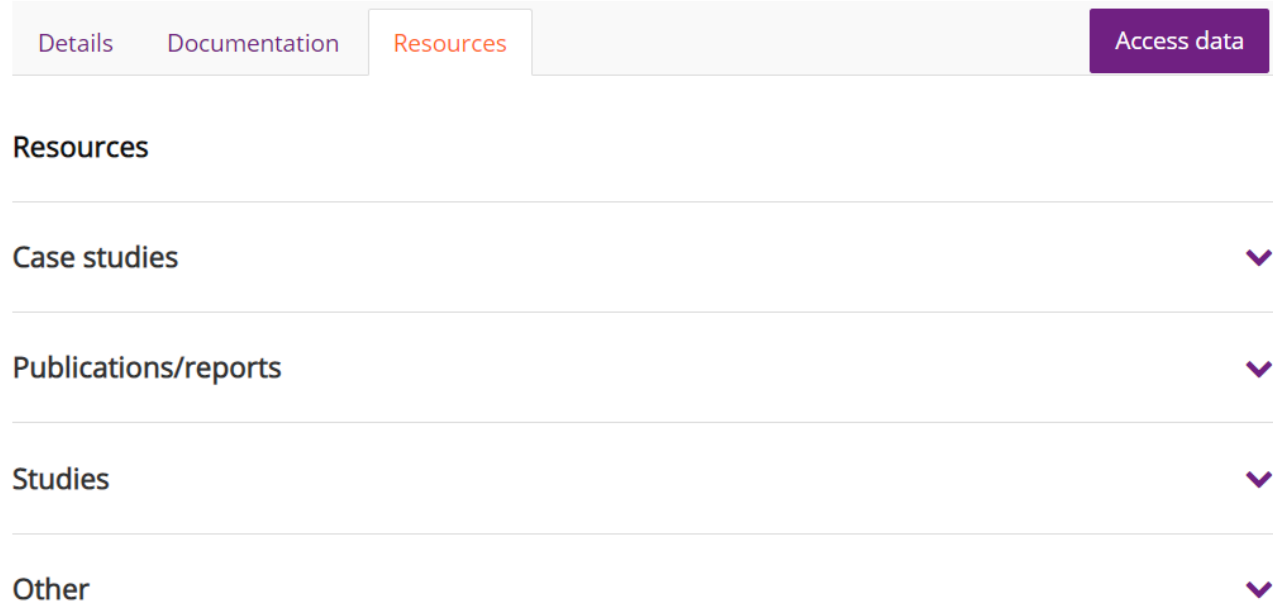
1. High temperature
23. Persistent coughing
24. Loss of concentration
25. Difficulty remembering things
3. Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
4. Runny or stuffy nose
5. Muscle or body aches
6. Headaches
7. Sore throat
8. Fatigue
9. Diarrhoea/Digestive issues/Upset stomach
10. Loss of sense of smell or taste
12. Decrease in appetite
13. Sneezing
14. Sore eyes
15. Hoarse voice
16. Dizziness
17. Tightness in the chest
18. Chest pain
19. Chills (feeling too cold)
20. Difficulty sleeping
21. Numbness or tingling somewhere in the body
22. Feeling of heaviness in arms or legs
26. Other

# Understanding Society resources

The Resources tab provides links to

- case studies that analyse key messages from the dataset
- publications that have used the dataset
- details of related studies / datasets
- other relevant information (in this case link to the Understanding Society website that includes a variable search facility)

Understanding Society: COVID-19 Study, 2020-2021



The screenshot shows the 'Resources' tab selected in a navigation menu. The menu includes 'Details', 'Documentation', 'Resources', and 'Access data'. Below the menu, the 'Resources' section is expanded to show a list of categories: 'Case studies', 'Publications/reports', 'Studies', and 'Other'. Each category has a downward-pointing chevron icon to its right, indicating that it can be expanded to show more content.

# Survey weights

- Survey datasets contain weighting variable(s) in the dataset
- Make the sample data better represent the population – results can be incorrect without weights
- Easy to use in statistics packages
- Details will be in the survey documentation

For more information see our guides

- What is weighting?
- An introduction to using weights in social surveys (Video)
- How to use weights in Nesstar (Video)
- Guides to SPSS, Stata and R
- Data skills modules

# Access conditions

## Open access

- Available with few restrictions
- Small number of teaching datasets

## Safeguarded

- Most survey data is safeguarded
- End User Licence (EUL) and Special Licence
- Need to register and agree to conditions
- May have additional conditions

## Controlled

- Applications checked
- Access through a secure access agreement
- Access through a physical or virtual secure environment

# Looking at the website

<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk>



# Upcoming events

FEB 28 2024, 1:00 PM [Accessing and using 'real-world' study data](#)

MAR 5 2024, 11:00 AM [Introduction to the UK Data Service](#)

MAR 11 2024, 10:00 AM [Dissertation projects: Introduction to secondary analysis for qualitative and quantitative data](#)

MAR 12 2024, 11:00 AM [Finding and accessing data from the UK Data Service](#)

MAR 12 2024, 1:00 PM [Computational social science drop-in](#)

MAR 19 2024, 9:30 AM [Coding in public: Barriers to reproducibility \(University of Manchester\)](#)

More introductory workshops will be added for April+. See our training and events page: [Training and events — UK Data Service](#)



# Any questions?

Sarah King-Hele

[Sarah.king-hele@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.king-hele@manchester.ac.uk)