

**Social Survey Division on**  
**NP3APP001**

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**Title: Non-response Programme in Social Surveys 2012-2014**

Categorisation  
Non Response / Response Rates\SVS  
Papers

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**Introduction**

In brief:

Following response rates falling below 72% and after a review by SSPG and the National Statistician (Karen Dunnell), SSD/SDC/LMD/MD/DS conducted a non-response programme between 2008-2010 that had 5 streams:

- 1) Review of data collection strategies-work by Neil Hopper (MD) on reasons for non-response, calling patterns and [REDACTED] (SSD) on non-response by OAC resulted in changes to calling strategies in the field. ILR training, ART and finally ACT were also rolled out to field. [REDACTED] paper also concluded that refusal rates were consistent across OAC's but contact rates varied. Analysis of response rates and field strategies is ongoing.
- 2) An analysis of attrition bias between waves in the LFS by LMD-concluded that moderate attrition bias existed.
- 3) An analysis on the sensitivity of the LFS key estimates to non-response bias by SSD-a article was published in SMB concluding that the LFS was sensitive to non-response bias. The paper was presented at the LFS User Group in 2008.
- 4) A review of the current status of non-response across NSI's by DS which suggested questionnaire length and incentives may impact on response rates but it was not conclusive-the LFS already uses stamps at key times and the LCF monetary incentives.
- 5) A review of previous non-response studies by MD including the 2001 CNRLS.

The UKSA also recommended that the LFS notify users of non-response in their review of Labour Market Statistics in 2010.

It was then decided following the above to:

- 1) Publish improved response rates in the Performance Quality Monitor.
- 2) Set reponse targets in the field to monitor and attempt to reduce the rate of decline.
- 3) Review the length of the LFS-this led to the removal of over 30 questions following Labour Market and Educational Training reviews in 2010 and 2011.

- 4) Conduct a paradata analysis on the LFS and LCF-this led to a correlation between GOR and dwelling type with non-response being established.
- 5) Conduct a Refusal Follow Up funded by EUROSTAT as a result of the Quality task Force Recommendations in 2009-results just delivered, suggests potential bias in LFS estimates and differential characteristics of refusers and reasons for refusals which will now be used to review data collection strategies and feed in to the CNRLS.
- 6) Conduct a review of incentives-article produced in Reserach Digest in 2011 .
- 7) Prepare for the 2011 CNRLS-questions added to Social Surveys around Census date. The CNRLS will produce estimates of bias in the surveys and allow non-response weights to be calculated if bias is uncovered.
- 8) Push for internet collection modes on the LFS in the hope that this would improve response from certain groups eg 18-30 year olds.
- 9) Improve the data collection material with SG and WG logo's on letters and a survey link in the new website.

A paper on the strategy for non-response is Social Surveys was produced.[Notes Link](#)

ONS also attended International workshops on non-response in Germany etc and are working with EUROSTAT on consistent non-response measures across member states. The recruitment freeze also led to more experienced interviewers being in the field rather than employed in training new interviewers.

The above seems to have led to a stabilisation of response rates on Social Surveys.

A timetable for 2009-2011 was produced: [Notes Link](#)

#### **Aim of this paper**

The final tasks on the timetable which have not yet been completed are:

Change data collection strategy
Calculate bias estimates regular a regualr basis using paradata and/or refusal follow up
Calculate non-response weights during Census Link study

Now we are in 2012 and following completion/non-completion of the above work what should be the next phase of monitoring, analysing and countering non-response?

How should we use the results of the paradata studies, the RFU and the ACT training to influence our non-response strategy?-meeting with Helen's team in Titchfield.

How is the CNRLS being coordinated with our non-reponse strategy?-spoken of non-response weights to be implemented during Census reweighting.

How is the EDC being coordinated with the strategy?-now delivering for 2015/16.

How should the non-response programme be governed?-at SSPG spoken about continuing the non-response group with S&S.