Transforming Social Survey data Collection in the UK – opportunities and challenges

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Social Survey Statistical Redesign
ONS
The world is changing

• Digital revolution
  Across public and private sector
  Online shopping, online banking, online everything...
  Driving licences, car tax, public services in the round

• Data revolution
  Loyalty cards, road traffic
  Data is the ‘new oil’

• ONS leadership
  Better Statistics, Better Decisions
It will drive a revolution for ONS

• Data is our core business
• Already on the journey
  Electronic Data Collection, admin data
• It will change the nature of our surveys
  Why collect what already exists?
• We will still need surveys – but they will look very different in 5 years
Data Collection Transformation

“To rebalance ONS’ data collection activity significantly toward wider, more integrated use of administrative data sources, thereby reducing our reliance on large population and business surveys....Further, the remaining survey operations will become more efficient through a move from paper and personal interview-based collection to online data collection.”
Social Survey Transformation

• Data integration
  Administrative data use alongside surveys
• Online Surveys
  Mixed mode
• Survey rationalisation & redesign
• Field force modernisation
• Portfolio of continuous ONS social surveys and several GSS surveys; smaller ad hoc surveys
• Multiple topics, multiple designs, multiple approaches; Blaise based
• Harmonised but not integrated; individual designs
• Silos reflective of individual analytical requirements and reflective of history and fear of discontinuity
What is the desired “future state”?

• Multi source, multi mode data collection
  ➢ Surveys, admin, big data
  ➢ Surveys digital by default where sensible
• Balance moving increasingly from surveys to non-survey
• Supported by common services / IT systems
  ➢ For ONS and external use
• Saving money
Non-survey data – Opportunities

- Improve survey coverage
- Replace survey questions
- Targeted sampling
- Improved sample frames
- Improved quality
- New outputs
- More timely data
- Reduced burden on respondents
Non-survey data – Challenges

- Concept alignment
- Definitions of admin data and survey question
- Quality e.g. timeliness, coverage, coherence
- Quality Assurance of Admin Data (QAAD)
- Process maps to understand data journey
- Linking rates
- Security of ongoing supply
Move On-Line - Opportunities

• Transform NOT Translate
• Take LFS back to a Labour Market Survey
• Respondent Centric Design
• Transform engagement
• Quality
• Savings
Move On-Line - Challenges

• Self-completion with voluntary surveys
• Designing to keep pace
• Engaging with respondents
• Stakeholders – breaks in series
• Design constraints
• Are there really costs savings?
The real opportunity/challenge!

Admin data

Sampling Frame, Address Base +

Wave 1 Questionnaire
Mode: Mixed - web, telephone, Face to face
Topics: demographics and core labour market

Responding households / persons

Non-Responding households

This is the sampling frame used for subsequent collections

Labour Market  Wealth  Income  Expenditure  Opinions

These could be longitudinal or cross-sectional surveys.
Could be single or mixed mode. Could be household or person level.
Option 1 – LFS design with PCS ‘boost’

- Core master wave randomly sampled - provides a frame for other ONS surveys
- Boost needs to be large enough to meet all PCS requirements (HtC weighting, dependant sampling etc)
Option 2 – Master Wave designed for PCS

- Use administrative records to stratify the PCS sample
- Admin data needs to be of high quality to re-weight PCS sample for LFS and other surveys
Option 3 – Master Wave based on ADC Characteristics Survey

- Master wave based on larger random sample of households
- Use admin data to check that PCS requirements met by master wave