

BHPS UPDATE

Spring 2007



The British Household Panel Survey

The British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) has interviewed members of the same sample of households every year since 1991. The main objective of the study is to further our understanding of the dynamics of social and economic change in Britain – across the whole age range of the population. The data supports analysis of both short-term processes – such as year-to-year changes in people's experience of poverty – and longer-term life course mobility. It also places individual change within the context of the household.

The BHPS had an original sample size in 1991 of 5,500 households, covering England, Scotland and Wales. Additional samples in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have been available in recent years. The total sample size is now around 9,000 households across the UK, providing annual interviews with some 15,000 individuals.

The core questionnaire covers a broad range of social science and policy interests and supports interdisciplinary research in many subject areas. The data are available from the UK Data Archive at the University of Essex. This Update is mainly aimed at researchers who analyse the data, or who are interested in doing so.

The survey is designed, managed and distributed by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at the University of Essex. It is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.

Headlines

Major new household panel survey awarded to ISER

ISER has been awarded a £15.5 million contract to design and manage the new **UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS)**. The BHPS sample will be incorporated into the UKHLS at what would be wave 19 of the BHPS. The UKHLS is commissioned by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and will go into the field in January 2009. It will provide valuable new evidence about the people of the UK, their lives, experiences, behaviours and beliefs, and will enable an unprecedented understanding of diversity within the population. UKHLS will assist with understanding the long term effects of social and economic change, as well as policy interventions designed to impact upon the general well-being of the UK population. Key features of the UKHLS include:

- a total target sample size of 40,000 households/100,000 individuals
- a new ethnicity strand, incorporating additional samples and dedicated questions for an ethnic minority boost sample of over 3,000 households
- incorporation of the BHPS sample from 2009 (i.e. BHPS wave 19)
- interviews from all household members, aged 10 and above
- topic coverage relevant to a wide range of disciplines and policy fields
- links to supplementary administrative data, e.g. health and neighbourhood statistics
- the collection of health indicators and in the longer term, biomarkers
- a platform for the collection of qualitative data
- an *Innovation Panel* for methodological research.

The Principal Investigator for the UKHLS is Nick Buck who also heads up the BHPS. The UKHLS project will be led by ISER together with colleagues from the University of Warwick and the Institute of Education, London. Further details about the UKHLS can be found at <http://iser.essex.ac.uk/ukhls/>

UKHLS topic consultation

There will be significant consultation with potential users on the content of the UKHLS. An initial Consultation Launch Meeting is scheduled for June 19th at the Royal Statistical Society, London. See <http://iser.essex.ac.uk/ukhls/consult1/launch/>. This will be followed by a series of topic specific meetings during late June and July. If you wish to contribute to the consultation process please register your interest at <http://iser.essex.ac.uk/ukhls/kit/>. Details of the topic specific meetings are at <http://iser.essex.ac.uk/ukhls/consult1/meetings/>

BHPS UPDATE *online*

BHPS UPDATE provides a guide to information about the BHPS, most of which is available on the Web. The easiest way to access this information is to go to www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/update and connect to the online PDF version of BHPS UPDATE. It is laid out identically to this paper version. Then just click on the links you want to follow. Why not bookmark BHPS UPDATE for easy reference?

BHPS conference

ISER will be hosting the 2007 BHPS Research Conference in July 2007 at the University of Essex. This conference provides an international forum for the exchange of research based on longitudinal data. While priority is given to papers based on research using the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) or the European Community Household Panel (ECHP), papers using other data sources which promote the use of longitudinal data on individuals or households will be included in the programme. In addition, papers using cross-national comparisons will be presented. An important aim of the conference is to bring together people from different disciplines and papers are based on any aspect of economics, sociology, politics, social psychology, or research and survey methods. For details of how to register and the conference programme see <http://iser.essex.ac.uk/bhps/2007/>

BHPS data news

Wave 15

Wave 15 Data has now been deposited with the UK Data Archive and is available for download at <http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/> Information on how to acquire the data is also available from the ULSC web-site at: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/acquiring/>

Wave 15 parallels waves 5 and 10 in that it collects detailed information about personal wealth, assets and debt. Wave 15 also includes the 'Big 5' personality trait measures in the self-completion questionnaire. These were from the winning proposal for the Free One Minute competition in 2005. The wave 15 questionnaires are available at <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/doc> and the user documentation is available on the BHPS web-site: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/>

Also recently released to the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) at the UK Data Archive are two additional files: (1) a consolidated cohabitation, marital and fertility file including the retrospective lifetime histories and subsequent panel data from 1991 to 2005; and (2) net income files updated through wave 14. For further details and access to these files, see: <http://www.esds.ac.uk/findingData/bhpsTitles.asp>

Wave 16

Fieldwork for wave 16 is now complete and data processing, including cleaning and release preparations are well underway. Wave 16 parallels wave 11 in asking about themes such as ageing, retirement, family support, health, and quality of life.

Wave 16 sees the introduction of dependent interviewing (DI). DI uses data gathered at prior waves to phrase questions and route respondents through the current wave's instrument. Reports from field suggest that respondents and interviewers find DI helpful. DI has been used in to gather information about respondent's current employment situation, to check

large changes in reported income, to re-route respondents through employment history questions, to remind respondents of unearned income sources reported in prior waves, and to remind respondents of the start of a private personal pension to which they may have contributed. An ISER working paper documents the implementation of DI at wave 16. Please see: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs/workpaps/pdf/2007-07.pdf>. The wave 16 questionnaires are available at <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/doc>

Wave 17

Wave 17 is ready for the commencement of fieldwork on 1st September 2007. In addition to the core longitudinal components, wave 17 will include questions about children and parenting, non-resident parents, young people's aspirations, crime, and computer use. These items were last carried at wave 12. Due to time pressures on development work, there will be no Free One-Minute competition at wave 17.

BHPS training and user support

5-6 July 2007 – 'BHPS using STATA' & 'BHPS using SPSS'

An introduction to using the BHPS data for both STATA and SPSS users will take place in conjunction with the BHPS conference. A two hour introduction will take place on 5 July, with a full day of activity the following day. The main focus will be on the data reorganisation techniques required for different types of cross-sectional and longitudinal research, rather than the statistical techniques themselves, but it is informed by the ways in which data require to be organised for different statistical techniques. Basic working knowledge of STATA or SPSS will be assumed. For further information and to register, please see <http://iser.essex.ac.uk/bhps/2007/index.php>

9 July-17 August 2007– 40th Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection.

The School consists of three two-week sessions. Each session offers a variety of courses. Courses run for either two weeks, one week, or over the weekend. The BHPS will feature in several courses including "Introduction to Longitudinal Research & Analysis" taught by Dr. Jane Elliott (IoE) and "Introduction to STATA" taught by Dr. Karen Robson (IoE). Further information can be found on the Essex Summer School web-site at: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/methods/>.

Survey link scheme

The Survey Link Scheme, supported by the ESRC Training and Development Board, exists to give academic social scientists the opportunity to acquaint themselves with professional social survey research. The scheme provides anyone interested in learning more about specific studies, including the BHPS, to attend a one-day overview lecture as well as have an opportunity to observe interviewing in-field. Further details of the programme can be found at the Survey Link Scheme web-site:

<http://qb.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sls.htm>. The next BHPS workshop is on July 4th 2007 at the University of Manchester.

The Hilary Doughty Research Library

The Hilary Doughty Research Library, formerly known as the Research Resources Unit (RRU) is a library collection that includes grey literature and other publications with a focus on longitudinal research, analysis and methodology. The collection is searchable through the web at

<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/reslib/>

A search facility specifically for all publications using the BHPS (non-ISER as well as ISER) is available. To search for BHPS publications go to

http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/reslib/bhps_cat.php

Keeping Track. A guide to longitudinal resources

Keeping Track is a database of all longitudinal datasets in the UK and around the world. This provides an up-to-date guide to major longitudinal sources of data, allowing users to see what kinds of longitudinal data are available and to locate information about studies which may provide data useful to their research interests. Keeping Track can be accessed at

<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/keeptrack>

ULSC methodology programme

The UK Longitudinal Studies Centre (ULSC) is the division of ISER responsible for the design, management and distribution of the BHPS. It also undertakes a programme of methodological research. Some current projects of the ULSC Methodology Programme are listed below. All are funded by the ESRC; the first two under their small grants scheme and the other three under the Survey Design and Measurement initiative.

Errors in repeated measures from panel data

Annette Jäckle, Peter Lynn and Stephen Jenkins are investigating the properties of errors in panel responses and their impact on estimates. The project will use survey responses from four interviews on the receipt of state benefits and tax credits. These have been matched to administrative records in order to identify response errors. The researchers aim to evaluate the usefulness of data collection techniques meant to reduce errors and to assess and develop statistical adjustments to correct for errors in estimation.

Impact of dependent interviewing on interview dynamics

Emanuela Sala and SC Noah Uhrig are currently examining interview transcripts from the BHPS Wave 16 Dependent Interviewing Pilot. This project involves behaviour coding the verbal interaction between interviewer and respondent, and identifying problematic interactions using sequence analysis. The aim is to help inform better questionnaire design, interviewer training and monitoring with a view towards improving data quality.

Understanding non-response and reducing non-response bias

Peter Lynn is leading a project to improve understanding of the nature of the non-response process and how this relates to bias in survey estimates. The 3-year study involves researchers from three institutions and contains five sub-projects: (1) Developing a structured framework of factors affecting non-response bias; (2) Cross-national replication of non-response research; (3) Interrogating call data to better understand links between field processes and nonresponse bias (4) The relationship between manipulable survey design features and non-response bias; and (5) Reducing attrition on longitudinal surveys.

Solving the problem of attrition in longitudinal surveys

ULSC researchers are participating in a project on panel attrition led by Professor John Bynner of Longview. This project will investigate the causes of non response in longitudinal surveys through secondary analysis of established longitudinal data sets. A second phase will involve formulating a strategy for encouraging continued participation; design and implementation of an exemplar field experiment to test the strategy; and analysis of the results. The findings should contribute to theory and practice in the field as applied to longitudinal surveys.

Mixed modes and measurement error

Annette Jäckle and Peter Lynn, along with Gerry Nicolaas from the National Centre for Social Research, will be working on a theoretical framework, based on existing and new complementary findings, about the causes and consequences of mixing modes. The project aims to assess the susceptibility of different types of survey questions to various mode effects. Employing secondary analysis of existing data, as well as carrying out novel mixed mode experiments, they hope to develop a set of principles for designing questions that are portable across modes.

BHPS User Group

The BHPS User Group is a liaison channel between ISER and the users of BHPS data. It provides a forum for the exchange of ideas, problems and solutions for data users and provides feedback to the survey designers and managers. Users also benefit from the opportunity to put their ideas for future data collection and from keeping in touch with developments on the survey. Interested researchers can join the User Group via the web at <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/group>

Tell us about your working papers and publications using BHPS data please! It is important we know how people are using the data and these are important performance indicators. If you use "BHPS" as a keyword and/or in the abstract on your papers, this will help us pick them up with automated searches. You can email judi@essex.ac.uk or bhps@essex.ac.uk with details of publications or other papers. Many thanks.

BHPS publications

The BHPS now has well over 2,000 registered users with 806 joining since April 2006. So far in 2007 we have recorded approximately 39 new publications and papers. You can find publications using the BHPS in three main ways:

- The on-line documentation has a full list of all publications we are aware of in Vol A, Appendix 5. If you have a paper or publication which is not listed please send us the details. See <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/doc>
- You can search our specialised catalogue http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/reslib/bhps_cat.php
- Or you can see ISER Working Papers at <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/pubs>

The following are just a few recent publications using the BHPS since Autumn 2006

Bramley G., T. Champion T, T. Fisher (2006) 'Exploring the household impacts of migration in Britain using panel survey data'. *Regional Studies* 40 (8): 907-926

Coupré H. (2007) 'Time allocation within the family: Welfare implications of life in a couple' *Economic Journal* 117 (516): 287-305.

Koevoets, W. (2007) 'Union wage premiums in Great Britain: Coverage or membership?' *Labour Economics* 14 (1): 53-71

Ferrer-i-Carbonell, A., J. M. Gowdy (2007) 'Environmental degradation and happiness' *Ecological Economics* 60 (3): 509-516.

Schraepfer, J-P (2006) 'Explaining income-non-response: A case study by means of the British Household Panel Study', *Quality And Quantity* 40(6):1013-1036.

Swaffield J.K. (2007) 'Estimates of the impact of labour market attachment and attitudes on the female wage' *Manchester School* 75 (3): 349-371.

Thomas C, Benzeval M, Stansfeld S (2007) 'Psychological distress after employment transitions: the role of subjective financial position as a mediator' *Journal Of Epidemiology And Community Health* 61 (1): 48-52

People

If you want to contact someone with a particular area of expertise within ISER but don't know who is best placed to help you, try looking at

<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/search/expertise.php>

What do you think of this BHPS UPDATE?

Any comments on the content or the presentation? Do you like the combination of hard copy sent by post and pdf version online? Would you prefer us to send it by e-mail?

E-mail your comments and suggestions to Noah Uhrig at scnuhrig@essex.ac.uk

Questions? Comments? Project or paper to share?

Please do let us know if you are working on a project using BHPS data, are using the data for teaching, or have given a conference paper or published using the data. And if you have comments about any aspect of the BHPS please get in touch and give us your feedback.

If you have specific questions about using the BHPS data or data problems to report please feel free to contact us.

You can email John Brice at bricj@essex.ac.uk and he will be happy to help. Alternatively contact us at:

British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)
Institute for Social and Economic Research
University of Essex
Colchester
Essex CO4 3SQ
UK

Tel: +44 (0)1206 873543
Fax: +44 (0)1206 873151
Email: bhps@essex.ac.uk