

# BHPS UPDATE

Spring 2008



## 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

### UK Household Longitudinal Study Update

January 10th, 2008, saw a large Consultative Conference take place at the University of Essex. The conference had three main aims. First, to provide an update on progress with the UKHLS and the design decisions made for the survey. Second, to provide details of the content for Wave 1 of the study arising from the consultation process to date. Finally, and most importantly, to provide an opportunity to discuss plans for the content of the study from Wave 2 forward when the existing BHPS sample will be incorporated into the UKHLS. Approximately 120 delegates attended, many from overseas. The presentations and a summary of the discussion groups from the conference are now available on the website:

<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ukhls/conference/>

January also saw the start of the UKHLS Innovation Panel Wave 1. The fieldwork is being carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and started in mid-January and concluded at end of March. The data are returning to ISER and will be analysed by researchers at Essex in the first instance. The Innovation Panel is comprised of a random sample of 1,500 households and includes a range of experiments exploring more insensitive ways of asking questions, gathering consents to link to administrative data and fieldwork strategies for increasing response rates to feed into the main UKHLS survey. The data from the Innovation Panel will be made available with the main-stage UKHLS data via the Data Archive at Essex University.

The results of the Innovation Panel analyses will be used to inform later stages of questionnaire development. In addition a cognitive pilot – qualitative work on survey measurement is being conducted in April and a Wave 1 pilot survey will test the near-final instruments. The Wave 1 pilot will consist of a random sample of 100 households and is a 'dress rehearsal' for the main study. The pilot survey takes place in July and August. As the data returns from the pilot survey and is analysed, the questionnaire for the first wave of the UKHLS will be finalised. The UKHLS will be a Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) and will be translated into nine languages. The UKHLS main stage wave 1 sample will go into the field in January 2009 with monthly samples issued across a two year period. The wave 2 fieldwork starts in January 2010 so that an annual interview cycle is maintained.

## 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 these links is to connect to the online PDF version of the UPDATE at [www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/update/](http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/update/). It is laid out identically to this paper version. Then just click on the links you want to follow. Why not bookmark the BHPS UPDATE for easy reference?

## BHPS data news

Wave 16, covering themes such as ageing, retirement, family support, health and quality of life, is currently being finalised and is on schedule for release in May 2008. This release will coincide with the BHPS User Group Meeting (see below for more information). Wave 17 fieldwork has now finished and the data are returning to ISER for cleaning and further processing.

### Wave 18

Wave 18 will be fielded in September 2008. Children born at the same time as the BHPS started will be eighteen this year and so the potential value of the BHPS data increases enormously as we have tracked these individuals through their childhood and adolescence and into their adult years. This will be the last wave of data which are collected under the "BHPS" banner. From January 2010 the BHPS sample will be integrated into the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS). The transition to the UKHLS will be discussed at the BHPS User Group Meeting.

In addition to the core longitudinal components, Wave 18 of the BHPS will contain questions which were last carried at Wave 13 (2003). This material includes the expectations people have for relationships and marriage in the future. Views on the advantages and disadvantages of cohabiting will also be asked. Respondent views about their neighbourhood will also be queried including trust in the people in their area, the facilities and services in the local area, what the neighbourhood is like as a place to bring up children and how close they feel they belong to, and interact with, the neighbourhood. Some questions which will be carried on the first wave of the UKHLS will be included at BHPS Wave 18. These are items – such as parents' country of birth – which will only be asked at Wave 1 of the UKHLS and so would otherwise not be collected for the BHPS sample. At BHPS Wave 18 will also ask respondents for their consent to link data held by particular government departments to their survey data. The data will remain confidential and will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Access arrangements for data users will be put in place to maximise the usage of these data.

Data available for download at the UK Data Archive:

<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/>

Information on how to acquire the data is also available from the ISER web-site at:

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

The questionnaires are all available at:

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

There is also a detailed user documentation available on the BHPS web-site:

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

## BHPS training and user support

ISER runs regular short courses on using BHPS data. These have a practical orientation and are designed to introduce users to both data manipulation and statistical analysis techniques. Separate courses are run using both SPSS and STATA statistical software. A Stata course has been announced for April, 2008.

17-18 April 2008

Introduction to BHPS using Stata

Taught by Annette Jäckle and Alita Nandi

[http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/courses/stata\\_intro08.php](http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/courses/stata_intro08.php)

For further information on the range of courses, please see

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

### 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 new search facility specifically for all publications using the BHPS (non-ISER as well as ISER) has recently been added. To search for BHPS publications go to

[http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/reslib/bhps\\_cat.php](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 and the UKHLS. It also undertakes a programme of methodological research. More information about the work carried out by ULSC researchers is available at:

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

### Panel Survey Methods Workshop

Annette Jäckle, Peter Lynn, Emanuela Sala (ISER) and Mick Couper (Michigan) have organised a two-day workshop to foster discussion and initiate methodological research specific

to the collection of panel survey data. Participants from all over the world (UK, Germany, US, Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, Chile) will give short papers, with most of the time given to discussion. The program includes sessions on: correlates of attrition; attrition and measurement error; panel design options and attrition; tracking; panel and interviewer conditioning; modes; non-response adjustment; paradata and non-response adjustment; seam effects and data collection methods; evaluation of panel survey designs. This will take place at the University of Essex in Colchester on the 14th and 15th of July, 2008. For more information, please see <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/methods/psmw2008/>

## BHPS in the news

The baby blues: study finds a third of mothers slip down career ladder, *The Guardian*, 27 Feb 2008. Refers to Sara Connolly, Mary Gregory, Moving down: women's part-time work and occupational change in Britain 1991-2001. *Economic Journal*, 2008

Marital splits are still costly for mothers, *The Guardian*, 5 March 2008.

Mothers' incomes 'dip after split', *Channel 4*, 5 March 2008. Part-time pay penalty for mothers, *BBC News website*, 27 Feb 2008. Refer to: Stephen P. Jenkins, Marital splits and income changes over the longer term. *ISER Working Papers*, 2008-7

How to stay healthy in a sick economy, *Times Online*, 14 March 2008. Refers to: Mark P. Taylor, The psychological costs of unsustainable housing commitments. *ISER Working Papers*, 2006-8

Scots make best neighbours, *Daily Record*, 7 Feb 2008.

## BHPS publications

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](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>

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. There is a new web-form to allow you to let us know about recent

## 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>

On the 2nd May 2008, there will be a BHPS User Group meeting. This will take place at the Royal Statistical Society, 12 Errol Street, London EC1Y 8LX. The meeting starts at 10.30am and will conclude at approximately 4.00pm, lunch will be provided. There is no charge for the meeting.

In the morning, the meeting will look at recent waves of the BHPS. At Wave 16 Dependent Interviewing was implemented. This impacted the way in which the survey was conducted and the how the resulting data has been structured. With the recent release of Wave 16 data, ISER staff will outline how the data has changed and what effect this may have on the way users analyse the BHPS.

From 2007 a new data set has been available from the UK Data Archive. This is the 'Consolidated Marital, Cohabitation and Fertility Histories' data. The file contains information from the retrospective life histories and subsequent panel data related to respondents' partnerships and childbearing. Chiara Pronzato, the Principal Investigator on this project, will talk about this new data-set; how it was put together and the way in which it can be analysed.

In the afternoon, there will be more discussion about the future. Wave 18 will be fielded in September 2008. This will be the last interview with the BHPS sample before they become integrated into the UK Household Longitudinal Survey (UKHLS). Nick Buck will discuss the integration of the BHPS into the larger UKHLS, the implications this has on the questionnaire and question consistency across time, as well as the timing of interviews through the year and effect on the delivery of data.

Throughout the day there will be a chance to ask questions and raise points for discussion. For more information, and to book a place, please go to: <http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/bhps/group/meetings/>

publications using the BHPS, and which are not already included in the database. This form is on the ISER website and is an easy and quick way to keep us informed:  
[http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/reslib/res\\_serv/bhps\\_user\\_pubs.php](http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/reslib/res_serv/bhps_user_pubs.php)

Alternatively you can email [judi@essex.ac.uk](mailto:judi@essex.ac.uk) with details of publications or other papers.

The following are some of the recent publications using the BHPS in 2008.

Paull, Gillian (2008) 'Children and women's hours of work', *Economic Journal*, 118 (526): F8-F27.

Smith, Susan; Searle, Beverley A (2008) 'Dematerialising money? Observations on the flow of wealth from housing to other things', *Housing Studies*, 23(1): 21-43

Dearden, Lorraine; Fitzsimons, Emla; Goodman, Alissa; Kaplan, Greg (2008) 'Higher education funding reforms in England: the distributional effects and the shifting balance of costs', *Economic Journal*, 118 (526): F100-F125

Booth, Alison L.; van Ours, Jan C. (2008) 'Job satisfaction and family happiness: the part-time work puzzle', *Economic Journal*, 118 (526): F77-F99

Connolly, Sara; Gregory, Mary (2008) 'Moving down: women's part-time work and occupational change in Britain 1991-2001', *Economic Journal*, 118 (526): F52-F76

Croll, Paul (2008) 'Occupational choice, socio-economic status and educational attainment: a study of the occupational choices and destinations of young people in the British Household Panel Survey', *Research Papers In Education*

Zangelidis, Alexandros (2008) 'Seniority profiles in unionized workplaces: do unions still have the edge?', *Oxford Bulletin Of Economics And Statistics*

## 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 Jon Burton at [jburton@essex.ac.uk](mailto:jburton@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](mailto:bricj@essex.ac.uk) and he will be happy to help. Alternatively contact us at:

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